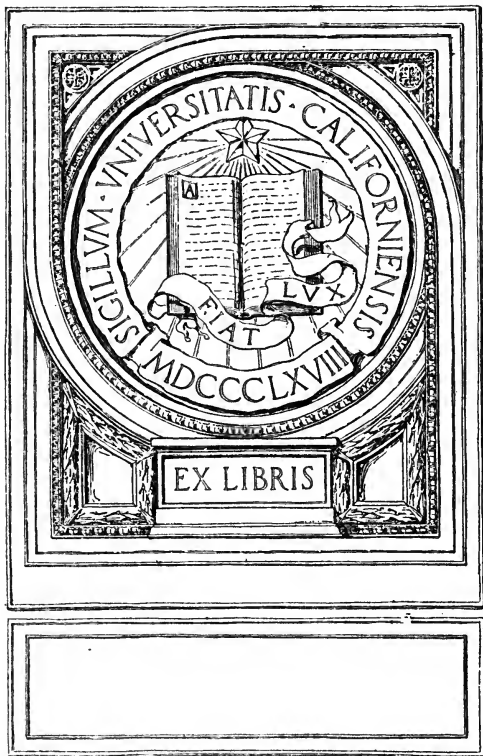


THE HUMAN NATURE
OF THE SAINTS

GEORGE HODGES

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THE HUMAN NATURE
OF THE SAINTS

CLASSBOOK OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY
EVERYMAN'S RELIGION
CHRISTIANITY BETWEEN SUNDAYS
THE HERESY OF CAIN
THE BATTLES OF PEACE
THE HUMAN NATURE OF THE SAINTS
THE PATH OF LIFE
IN THIS PRESENT WORLD
THE YEAR OF GRACE (2 Vols.)

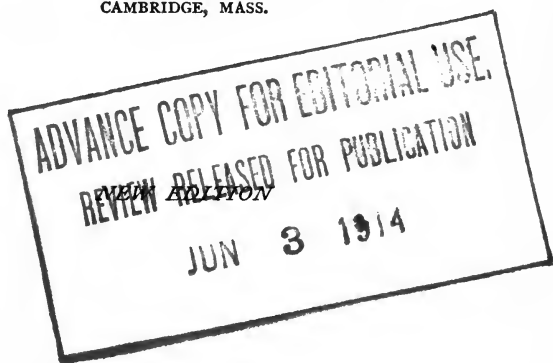
THE CROSS AND PASSION
FAITH AND SOCIAL SERVICE

The Human Nature of The Saints

BY

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CAMBRIDGE, MASS.



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Contents

THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS	1
SAINTS AND STRIKERS	10
THE WISDOM OF THE WISE MEN	25
THE PROGRESS OF ANDREW	37
THE DAMNATION OF DIVES	49
THE REALITY OF THE TEMPTATION	61
THE UNBELIEF OF THOMAS	79
BLIND BARTIMÆUS	89
THE MISSION OF PHILIP	102
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS	112
THE RELIGION OF A CHRISTIAN	125
THE RICH YOUNG MAN	139
THE WIND AND THE FIRE	154
AT THE TABLE OF ZACCHEUS	167
THE LORD'S BROTHER	179
ONE FROM TEN	192
SAINTS IN SUMMER	204
THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED	217
THE SATISFACTION OF RELIGION	230

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Contents

THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS	I
SAINTS AND STRIKERS	10
THE WISDOM OF THE WISE MEN	25
THE PROGRESS OF ANDREW	37
THE DAMNATION OF DIVES	49
THE REALITY OF THE TEMPTATION	61
THE UNBELIEF OF THOMAS	79
BLIND BARTIMÆUS	89
THE MISSION OF PHILIP	102
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS	112
THE RELIGION OF A CHRISTIAN	125
THE RICH YOUNG MAN	139
THE WIND AND THE FIRE	154
AT THE TABLE OF ZACCHEUS	167
THE LORD'S BROTHER	179
ONE FROM TEN	192
SAINTS IN SUMMER	204
THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED	217
THE SATISFACTION OF RELIGION	230

THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous.—*Matt.* 23 : 29.

OUR Lord is making no objection either to architecture or to enthusiasm. His words are not to be taken as a criticism of national monuments or even of cemeteries. They do not interfere with Memorial Day or with the Fourth of July or with the festivals of the saints.

What our Lord does object to is the hypocrisy which makes so much of the prophets after they are dead, while it abuses the prophets who are yet alive. Carved stones for Elijah and Elisha, cobble stones for John and Peter; that is what He means. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

And ye yourselves are filling up the measure of your fathers."

The name of this old sin, in the milder form which it assumes to-day, is detraction. It is now aimed not against the life of the prophet, but against his reputation. The great man comes, and divides society into parties. To those who are not of his party, he can do nothing good. They make it their business to obstruct and revile him. Every word and deed is interpreted in the interests of partisan prejudice. Even his intentions are accounted base.

"I am often amazed," said Mr. Gladstone, "at the construction put upon my acts and words; but experience has shown me that they are commonly put under the microscope, and then found to contain all manner of horrors, like the animalcules in Thames water." Somebody said to that great statesman at the end of his life, "You have so lived and wrought that you have kept the soul alive in England." His noblest contemporary, after he was dead, called him "a great Christian." His biographer closes the story of his life with the words, "He upheld a golden lamp." But you know very well how he was persistently maligned. You know that there were excellent people who could not say anything too bad about him.

For the sin of detraction is eminently the offense of excellent people. Our Lord was addressing the most respectable citizens of Jerusalem. Men and women who are apparently possessed of all the virtues will be so affected by the person of a prophet who prophesies on the other side that they will lie and steal. They will eagerly believe lies and repeat them to steal his good name. Some of them would like to kill him.

I hope that we may have the grace, so far as we are concerned, to contribute to a public opinion which is against the detraction of public men. A community which encourages school children to honor the memory of Washington and Lincoln, while at the same time it encourages politicians to defame the men who at this hour are serving the state, differs not at all from that against which the Lord spoke in the text.

What I have in mind, however, more particularly, is the detraction of the religious, the offense of the slanderous saints. Here, for example, is a passage from the life of Dr. Pusey: "During this time he was an object of wide-spread, deep, fierce suspicion. Some heads of houses would not speak to him when they met him in the street. The post brought him, day by day, various forms of insults by

4 THE HUMAN NATURE OF THE SAINTS.

letters, signed and anonymous. . . . He once said that that sort of thing took more out of him in half an hour than ten hours' work; and his frequent collapses of health were probably rather caused by heart than by head strain." The people who wrote to Dr. Pusey were very pious persons. They said their prayers and read their Bibles, and then wrote their letters.

So was the Rev. Augustus Toplady a pious person. You remember that he was the author of the hymn "Rock of Ages." He declared that John Wesley was a liar. He was quite certain of it, and he announced the fact in public with a loud voice—yes, with a joyful voice,—for he was at that moment engaged in a controversy with Wesley, and this assertion of Wesley's mendacity was for the purpose of making a point. It was a good point, as anybody can see. Mr. Toplady may have afterwards repented: I know not. It is unlikely: the controversialist rarely repents. Even if he does repent, the thing is done, the good man has been hit over the heart and it hurts, and apologetic words afterwards are a poor ointment.

The author of "Rock of Ages" was an abusive saint. Like Dr. Pusey's correspondents, he was filled with bitterness and wrath

and anger and clamor and evil-speaking,—and with religion. It is a strange, unholy combination ; but it exists.

Enoch walks with God, as the old record says. There he goes along the country road, hand in hand with God. And there, as they two walk together, Noah and Methuselah and Shem and Ham and Japhet hoot after them, and throw stones. It happens every day.

It comes, I suppose, from the great zeal which men have for the truth, or for their conception of the truth. They are afraid that something disastrous will be done to the truth. They do not perceive that Enoch is walking with God. All that they see is that he is going in another direction than that towards which their own feet are pointed, and they have a queer idea that if they shout at him and stone him, he will turn about and walk with them ! Why should he ? It is one of the most flagrant and foolish of errors.

Perhaps the heart of the matter is this : that the good, who know by their own experience how hard it is to stay good, find it easy to believe evil of the good. Anyhow, they do it. They believe evil and speak it. And it is a sin, like stealing. It is one of the sins of the saints.

It is true that an argument in favor of

strong language may be drawn from this very discourse of our Lord out of which the text is taken. "Ye serpents," He says, "ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" It is not absolutely certain, however, that He used those words. St. Luke reports this same address to the scribes and Pharisees, and leaves them out. He agrees with St. Matthew as to the sentences which precede and as to the sentences which follow. This particular hard sentence is omitted.

But, anyway, even if He did assail good churchmen with such bitter epithets, the question still remains as to the tone of voice in which He spoke. Did He speak in anger or in sorrow? Were His hands clenched, or were they held out in warning, in deprecation, in entreaty? Was He pushing the pharisees over the brink into the bottomless pit, or was He crying out in sharp distress to tell them the peril in which they stood? That, you see, will make a difference in our understanding of them. They must be interpreted by the tones of His voice. And these we hear in the words which follow, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and

ye would not." This is no language of controversy, no hurling back and forth of the hard names that hurt. It is in the midst of the holy week, and He who speaks stands already in the shadow of death, in the neighborhood of the cross. Let nobody come here for stones with which to bruise his neighbor's head.

It is true that an argument in favor of detraction may be found in the necessity to defend the truth. Somebody will say, What shall we do? Shall we stand quietly by and let error speak without contradiction? Shall we give the heretic and the schismatic the whole field? Shall we see church and state, town and parish, going to the bad and let them go? Shall we surrender?

No, friend, there shall be no surrender. But let us choose the most effective weapon. Let us contend for truth in the manner which shall best maintain the truth. When Jesus came, bringing the beatitudes with Him, preaching the gospel of gentleness and courtesy and brotherly love, He amazed His hearers. Indeed, are we not to infer from the account of the temptation that it seemed for a moment to Himself that the conquest of the world could hardly be attained by a campaign of peace. Else what is meant by that conversation with the devil on the top of the mountain. "All

these will I give Thee," says the devil, "but you must take possession through my help." To which the Lord answers, "Get thee behind Me, Satan."

All this endeavor to protect and advance the truth and the right by violence, by compulsion, by fierce controversy, by detraction, by writing letters which make the hearts of good men ache, by calling the saints liars, has always and everywhere brought about the defeat of the cause for which the contestant has thus contended. The Christian man who has fought with the devil's weapons has but cut his own hands.

Persecution has always turned against the persecutor. Truth makes its way by affirmation, not by negation. It is accepted by those who are fairly convinced by an appeal to reason. And that appeal is assisted by sympathy, by courtesy, by patience, by honest argument, and by nothing else. Everything else hinders,—detraction most of all.

Let us, then, build high the tombs of the old prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous men of the past time. But let us remember that our own age has its own prophets, and that the righteous are still with us. The best defense against detraction is to cultivate the opposite virtue of appreciation.

The best way to get out of a bad habit of blame is to get as quickly as we can into a good habit of praise. Let us expect goodness, and a high purpose, and a pure motive, and wisdom, and fine achievement; and be quick to discover them in public and in private. Let us deny, so far as lies in us, the ingratitude of republics. When we differ with our neighbors, as differ we must in a world where temperaments are so various and truth so vast, let us do it with a good spirit, without jealousy, and without suspicion. Let us see to it that no partisanship, whether political or ecclesiastical, shall make us blind to our neighbor's virtues, or dull to his achievements. If the book pleases us, let us write to the author and say so. If the thing that is said or done commends itself to us, let us not keep our appreciation secret. Let us praise our contemporaries without reluctance, and not wait till they are dead and out of hearing. So shall we behave ourselves as Christian citizens and churchmen, and steadily encourage and increase the goodness of the world.

SAINTS AND STRIKERS.

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?—*Amos*
3 : 3.

THAT depends upon their character, and upon the nature of their disagreement.

If they are nervous or narrow-minded persons they cannot walk together with any satisfaction, unless they walk in silence. The least difference of opinion irritates them, because they are irritable. A man who has good eyes goes about in the blaze of the sun, and enjoys it; but the sun hurts the man who has sore eyes. The fault is in the eyes. If the red-eyed man has good sense he keeps out of the sun; and if nervous and narrow-minded persons are wise enough to understand themselves they keep out of discussion. They are as unfit for it as a lame man is to run a race.

The like is true of all persons who are suspicious of the soundness of their own arguments, or of the excellence of their own cause. They are afraid; and because of their fear they lose control of themselves. He who is sure that he is in possession of the truth; he who knows that he is right, and that being

right all the forces of the universe are on his side; can afford to be serene and patient. When his adversary denies that two and two make four, he does not get excited. He does not tremble for the foundations of the world of mathematics. He remembers the philosopher who noticed that the burning of a little straw would for the moment hide the shining of the everlasting stars, but that the smoke always drifted away without doing the stars the smallest damage. It is the man who is maintaining that two and two make seven who gets excited; and his excitement is much increased if he suspects in the secrecy of his inmost soul that the true answer is not seven but either five or four. He cannot walk in peace with his neighbor, unless he avoids the subject of addition.

The nature of the disagreement enters also into the question. If the difference between the two is slight, or relates chiefly to details, then they will walk together only the more pleasantly by reason of it. Nothing is so obstructive to all rational and enjoyable conversation as complete agreement. They who agree entirely have nothing to say. The life of society is in its interesting divergencies of opinion. The good Lord has fortunately made even honest people very different. There are

as many minds as there are faces. Some people in every company are conservative, others are progressive. Nobody is completely right. So we go on arguing, walking together and debating as we walk, to our constant profit.

Even when the disagreement is deep and serious, and one is right according to all principles of goodness, while the other is wrong according to all principles of evil,—even here we may not lightly permit the two to walk apart. If the wise walk only with the wise, what will become of the fools? If the good associate only with the good, how will it fare with the bad? Will they not grow worse? If they who have the truth and the right forsake their neighbors who are in error, how shall mistakes be corrected? Is it not the business of those who see clearly to take their blind brothers by the elbow, and by walking with them keep them in the path? All disagreements are magnified and perpetuated by lack of acquaintance among those who hold different opinions. The personal element enters into all our social problems, and counts greatly. Prejudice keeps us from understanding one another, and prejudice grows rank in the soil of ignorance. Somebody said, "I hate that man." To which somebody else rejoined, "How can you hate him when you don't know

him?" And the answer was, "How could I hate him if I did know him?"

So we come back to the question, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" And we say, "Yes, if they are in good health and spirits, and are persons of some sense; especially if their disagreements are for the most part on the surface, while they are in substantial agreement underneath. Even they who are very seriously out of accord may well be advised to take a walk together, in hope of better understanding."

I have in mind the relation between the churches and the trade-unions. There is much natural misunderstanding on both sides. There are obvious disagreements. The churches and the unions speak in quite different dialects of the English language, and it is not easy for anybody to interpret the one to the other fairly. At the same time there are fundamental agreements. In a true sense we all mean the same thing. We are all open, as I hope to show, to the same criticisms. We are learning the same lessons. We are all alike in being sometimes right and sometimes wrong. The history of the unions is singularly near to the history of the churches. To many a man the union is the same thing as the church. The union is his church. The labor

movement is his religion; it is his idea of the progress of the kingdom of God. The two associations have many of the same virtues and many of the same defects. It will appear, I think, as we reflect upon the matter, that we are curiously in accord in regard to our blunders. The only errors of the union concerning which I have any qualification to speak are those which I am able to understand because they are equally the errors of the church. For better and for worse, the church and the union stand together.

The first agreement of the church with the union is in the fact of variety.

People sometimes speak of the union as if that name stood for a single type of the organization of labor; but the truth is that the unions are as different as the churches. Some are large, and some are small; some are old, and some are young; some are orthodox, and some are conservative. There are unions which are disposed to go into politics; while there are others which oppose such an association with all their might. So it is in regard to socialism: so in regard to industrial peace and war. There are unions which have a strike every few weeks; there are other unions which have not had a strike for forty years. Anybody who begins to talk about the church

may properly be interrupted after the first sentence and asked, "What church do you mean? are you discussing the Catholics or the Congregationalists? do you refer to the Presbyterians or to the Unitarians? are you criticising the Methodists or the Mennonites?" Plainly, there are differences. So there are among the unions.

The church and the union are alike in the reasonable demand to be judged by their best rather than by their worst, by their saints rather than by their sinners, by their ideals rather than by their blunders. They ought to be estimated by their official statements, not by the foolish speeches which were made in the debate. They are represented by their representative men, not by their heretics or their schismatics: by Bishop Lawrence and Bishop Potter, by Mr. Gompers and Mr. Mitchell. There are all sorts of churches and unions, but the only fair basis of praise or blame of the church movement or of the union movement is that which rests upon such churches and unions as are well established after long experience.

The second agreement of the church with the union is in the fact of unity: along with all this variety of character goes a unity of purpose.

This purpose is held in common by all good unions and by all good churches. It is the purpose to benefit the community. It is expressed in the phrase of our common Master when He said that He came not to be ministered unto but to minister. That is the ideal of us all.

It is true that the churches are sometimes criticised for caring less for earth than they do for paradise. It is said that their energies are mainly directed towards the life to come, and that they are altogether too contented with bad conditions in the life which now is. They want to go to heaven: whereas the right desire is to bring heaven down.

It is true that the unions are sometimes criticised for an opposite defect. It is said that the life of the spirit has no meaning for them. That what they are exclusively concerned about is present and material prosperity. They want more wages and less hours, and better houses and a fairer share of comfort.

That is, the churches act as if man had no body, while the unions act as if he had no soul. The churches treat him as if he were an angel; the unions treat him as if he were an animal. It is hard to put a right proportion of interest on all sides of life at the same

time. It is not to be wondered at if the church on the one side and the union on the other have omitted matters of importance. We have not done so with intention. We are all intent alike on the highest welfare of the whole man. But the physician has his proper work in dealing with the flesh, and the priest in dealing with the spirit. The union and the church stand in a like relation. A man ought to belong to a union in order that he may lift the level of common life for himself and for his fellows. Generally speaking, that cannot be done in any other way. The union is essential to the material welfare of the hand worker. The same man ought also to belong to a church in order that he may develop himself on the spiritual side, keep alive in his soul the consciousness of the unseen and eternal, and be helped to meet his daily temptations and to do his daily duty. The church and the union, like the priest and the physician, will each do better service by coming to a better understanding.

To this criticism which the church and the union are in the habit of making, one against the other, is to be added another which is often made by outside persons against them both. When we maintain that our supreme purpose is to set forward the welfare of the

community, they reply with some bitterness that in very truth neither of us, neither church nor union, cares for anything except our own advantage. What we really want, they say, is power and money, and our own good.

That is at the heart of the present opposition of the French government to the monasteries and the church schools. These religious folk, they cry, do not care for France : all that they care for is the increase of their order. If they were believed to be the servants of the people, honestly devoting themselves in the name of Jesus to the general good, asking for no return, they would be blessed rather than cursed by all their neighbors.

The same feeling is at the heart of the present wide-spread hatred of the trade-union. People look upon it as a secret society, intent on its own selfish purposes, and wholly regardless of the public. They find it practically impossible to distinguish between the monopoly of labor and the monopoly of capital. Anyway, it is a monopoly : that is, it is an endeavor of a few to get the better of the many.

These, of course, are misjudgments. They may indeed be based on facts ; there are selfish churches and there are selfish unions which deserve all the hard things that can be said against them. But we know, who view these

things from within, that the church and the union alike are actuated by a great, unselfish purpose to do good. We are all working for the Kingdom of God, for the advancement of all that makes for common justice, and righteousness and peace and joy. We are making many blunders, and some of them are bad ones; we are beset not only by the difficulties of the situation but by the weaknesses of our own human nature; we are abundantly open to criticism. We know that. But through all that we do, even through our folly, runs one high purpose, never wholly lost to sight,—the purpose to make it possible for every human being to live the life which is proper to a child of God.

Among many agreements between the church and the union I find a third in the fact that they are learning the same lesson.

The problem is how best to advance our common purpose. We all know by experience that this is a most difficult undertaking. The writer of the Psalms showed a good working knowledge of human nature when he spoke of the man who "hated to be reformed." Most men hate to be reformed. Churches and unions, like all other associations for improving the community, find this out. But men who ought to be reformed must somehow be

brought under the influences of reformation. The question is, How to do it.

The churches, being a good deal older than the unions, were the first to undertake this hard matter: and they have certain things to say about it as the result of experience. The chief conclusion of that experience is this: that no good cause is helped by compulsion. Men are brought to think aright and to act aright by being convinced, not by being compelled.

The question of the attitude of the union towards the non-union man is in all material respects like the question of the attitude of the church towards the heretic and the schismatic. The church, like the union, is certain of the righteousness of its own cause. It believes that the welfare of the whole community is involved in the Christian organization. And here it greatly exceeds the union: for while the union-man claims that his society is necessary to the salvation of the laboring class in this present life, the churchman asserts that his society is essential to the salvation of all people of all classes both in this world and the next. No unionist, in the very extremity of his enthusiasm, has ever said so much as that.

But the heretic and the schismatic weaken the church. They attack and endanger the

glorious cause. They bring into peril the immortal souls of men. They keep back the fulfilment of the will of God. I am trying to show the union-man that the churchman is able to understand how he feels because he occupies the same position. The union has never in its moments of deepest anger spoken of the scab as the church has spoken of the heretic. Did you ever read the major excommunication? The union has never punished the man who is accused of stealing his neighbor's job as the church has punished the man who is accused of destroying his neighbor's soul. Our custom was to burn such persons over a slow fire.

We have been through it all, from the least to the greatest and the worst. We have made use of the strike and the boycott to an extent which fills whole chapters of history. We have not hesitated, when we had a point to gain or an enemy to hurt, to lay a whole nation under an interdict, whereby the people were deprived of the necessities of spiritual life. When Mary was the Queen of England, you remember what we did. We got a law passed that nobody except an official of our union should baptize, or confirm, or administer the sacrament of the altar, or marry, or even bury in all the realm under pain first of fine, then of imprisonment, and then of

death. Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer were burned at the stake as non-union bishops. You know what we did as the Amalgamated Association of Congregationalists and Presbyterians. We cut off the head of a non-union king. You remember how we behaved in Massachusetts in the matter of the open state. There is no difference in principle between the open state and the open shop. The question was, Shall we permit non-unionists to share with us in the government? And we said No. Not a man shall hold a public office or even cast a vote unless he is a member of the church. And we whipped the non-union Baptists and the non-union Quakers, beating them with scourges through the streets of our chief cities.

It never did us any good. It never brought our cause to victory. It lead straight to defeat always. We have tried the policy of compulsion to the uttermost, and we assert as the total result of our experience that it is a policy of tragic blunder. We tried it in all honesty of purpose, for the general good, with a clear conscience, in the sight of God. It seemed to us, as it seems to-day to many a union, that it was the only thing to do. How can a man stand by in silence while a strike-breaker steals the bread out of the hands of

his hungry children? How can a man be passive and peaceable while a heretic is poisoning the wells of truth? We did just what the union does: we struck the heretic, intending thereby to do right and serve heaven. But we have to say that every such blow damaged our own cause, and helped heresy.

For human nature works that way. Institutionalism and individualism are alike ordained of God. He has implanted in our souls the instinct of association and the instinct of independence. They are both sacred. Both must be maintained. And in this nation both will be maintained, in spite of all possible protests of the unions or the churches. Men must be permitted to enter with all freedom into any kind of legal combination, whether we like it or not. And men must be permitted, if they choose, to stay outside all combinations unmolested. The corporation which opposes the organization of its men, and the union which refuses to work at the same trade with the independent workman, have each of them much to say for themselves, but after all is said the fact remains that they are contending against universal and eternal laws of human nature. And it is like contending against the law of gravitation.

I will not say that even the church has

learned this lesson to the last page, and got it all by heart. It is one of the most difficult of all the lessons of the Book of Life. God forbid, then, that the church should criticise the union for its treatment of the non-unionist, in any other than a sympathetic spirit. It is both bad and vain, and we are bound to say so. But we found that out by doing the same thing, and being punished for it. The union is following in the steps of the church. It is learning the same lesson, it is going through the same experience, it will reach the same conclusion.

Here we stand, the union and the church, servants of the people. We agree in the variety of our character, in the unity of our high purpose, and in the slow-learned fact that that purpose is defeated by compulsion, and gained only by reason and sympathy and patience. God bless our common purpose. God help us out of misunderstanding and suspicion into such cooperation as shall bring us to its best attainment.

THE WISDOM OF THE WISE MEN.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem.—*Matt.* 2 : 1.

THE wise men showed their wisdom by the use which they made of their eyes, their feet and their hands.

With their eyes, they saw the star. But that was no great thing. Anybody with eyes, who looks up into the clear sky at night, can see a star. All the neighbors of the wise men saw the star, and so did the sheep in the fields and the dogs in the streets. The difference between the wise men and their neighbors was that while the neighbors saw the star, the wise men recognized it.

“The star was so beautiful, large and clear,
That all the other stars of the sky
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,
And by this they knew that the coming was near
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.”

But the white mist appeared only to the wise men, and was caused by the intentness with which they looked at the new star. They

looked at it with all their eyes, till every other sight became but a dim blur in comparison. Other people of that town were a good deal interested. They watched the sky night after night, and pointed out the new star to their children. But the nights were cold, and it was rather hard to distinguish the new star from the crowd of old ones, and presently they ceased to look. They had seen only that which was visible,—and not all of that,—the wise men had seen the invisible. That was the difference.

Was there really a new star? Into the mathematical domains over which the astronomers keep guard did there actually enter a new light, significant of an event on earth, summoning those who saw and understood to the cradle side of a new King? The stars used to be consulted for information. There they shone like jewels in the ancient ceiling of the sky, kindled by God's hand, moved here and there in mystic combinations by God's will, no doubt spelling out great truths, the letters of divine messages, if we did but know enough to read them. So men thought, as we think no longer. You can still have your horoscope read, and learn what is written about you in the firmament of heaven. But the customers of the astrologers are no longer

persons of good health and sense. All that has gone by. The stars enter no longer into human life. Was there a star? Would they have seen it at the college observatory? And if there was, as Kepler maintained, did it have a meaning?

We cannot help asking these questions. They belong to the temperament of the time, which inevitably affects us all. We cannot read the story with the quiet acceptance which was given to it by our fathers. The answers, however, whether they fall on one side or on the other, are not of great importance. The visit of the wise men has no place in Christian doctrine. Nothing depends upon it. Only let us take care lest we treat the story as the wise men's neighbors treated the star, who looked at it, and were puzzled by it, and saw no meaning in it, and then went on and thought no more about it. Whether or not it has the truth of statistics, it has the higher truth of poetry. Whether or not it can be verified in the realm of geography, it is blessedly and eternally true in the realm of the spirit. The wise men saw the star. Watchers of the sky, and thus occupied about their ordinary business, God addressed them in their own language, met them on their own ground, spoke to them from the pages of their own books,

even as He came afterwards in another form to men who were occupied with their nets. In the stars to the astronomer, in the boats and the nets to the fisherman, to each of us in the opportunities of our daily tasks, God comes. He still comes, and still speaks. The story of the wise men is verified in our own experience. Living as we do in an environment of mystery, in a world of which we understand but a very little, let us treat these beautiful stories of the beginnings of the Perfect Life with becoming humility. Especially let us see to it that no new learning be allowed to rob us of our appreciation of their ideal fitness, or to make us indifferent to their spiritual truth or to their divine message to our souls.

The wise men saw the star, and because they were wise they knew what the star meant. They saw the invisible. The secret of true sight is to see the invisible. To a dog, or a looking-glass, or a camera, a page of print is nothing but a page of print, so many inches this way and that of black lines on a white ground. To a wise man, it is a message, an instruction, even an inspiration. He looks upon it, and is thereafter different. The sight has brought a new thought into his mind, a new motive into his life. The dull man, looking over his shoulder, makes nothing of it.

He sees only the visible : a wise man sees the invisible.

Jesus went about dividing men into companies of the wise and of the unwise. The sight of His face was like the sight of the Epiphany star : everybody saw Him, a few recognized Him. If you had asked the few how they recognized Him, they could not have given any adequate answer. They were like the wise men who if they had been asked how they knew that the star had a meaning could not have answered in terms of astronomy. They knew it ; that was all there was about it.

Recognition belongs to the regions of mystery, and eludes all endeavor to define it. The man who comes out from the hearing of great music, with his face aflame like the upturned faces of the Bethlehem shepherds, cannot explain his emotion. He cannot convince the doubter, or make his unappreciative neighbor appreciate. He has seen the star, and the star has brought him a message from the Eternal. If the star has brought no message for his neighbor, it must be that his neighbor does not understand star language. There is no grammar nor dictionary of that mystic speech. The knowledge of it comes by nature, or by the inspiration of God. It is significant that on the Damascus road Saul heard a voice,

while his companions heard only a sound. It is another symbol of the difference between people, whereby one sees and hears while those who stand about are deaf and blind.

Having thus seen the star, the wise men followed it. With their feet, they followed the star. This was the natural result of recognition. He who has looked into the heart of a new truth, he who has found a new hero or a new saint, cannot be contented to sit still. He is impelled to action. He must do something. What shall we do? cry the publicans and the soldiers, after John the Baptist's sermon. What shall we do? demand the hearers of the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? asks Saul in the moment of the heavenly vision. The wise men have this instinctive sense of service. Beholding the star, it seems to beckon to them; it goes on across the sky; and they follow. They must follow. All vital truth beckons to men, summons them, calls them out of quiet and content to follow it. Because it is vital truth it has to do with life, and affects life, making it different.

Sometimes the call of truth is to go on to the discovery of more truth. The man is given a glimpse which fills him with desire for clearer and nearer sight. He sees the star, but

that does not satisfy him : he would seek the source of the star. The star shines not for its own sake but as an evidence of another light which the lover of light must find. The wise men were brethren of the honorable fraternity of scholars. The news of the coming of Christ which had been brought to a maiden in her chamber, to a priest before the altar, and to shepherds tending their flocks, comes now to men of reflection and study. And the immediate result of it in their case is to make them study harder. Out they go upon a journey of investigation. To the revelation which God had made in the sky they would add another revelation which they trusted God would make within reach of their journeying feet and of their generous hands. Thus the Epiphany is the Christian festival of devout scholars, and its meaning is that God is pleased to lead the scholar from truth to truth, from the visible to the invisible, from the less to the greater, from the imperfect knowledge of to-day to the clearer knowledge of to-morrow, from a light in the night sky to the light that never was on land or sea.

It has been helpfully noticed that the direction of the wise men's journey is a symbol of the progress of the student not only from truth to truth but from the abstract to the concrete.

That journey lay from east to west, and between the east and the west there is, and always has been, a temperamental difference. The man of the east is a contemplative person; the man of the west is an active person. The Oriental is naturally a dreamer; much of the best energy of the east has gone into a philosophy so subtle and intricate that to the west it means nothing intelligible. The Occidental is naturally a worker; the activities of the west have been chiefly exercised in the perfecting of machinery, and in the administration of the great affairs which machinery has made possible. Accordingly, one who journeys out of the east into the west passes from the region of ideals into the region of realities. Truth in the east is to be reflected upon, in the west it is to be applied. The east is the land of truth-for-truth's-sake; the west is the land of truth-for-life's-sake.

The westward journey of the Epiphany pilgrims finds its counterpart in the work of the student of history who applies his studies of the past to the interpretation of the present; or of the student of science who increases his knowledge of the forces of nature that he may thereby increase the fund of human happiness, and make the world a pleasanter place to live in; or of the student of literature whose de-

sire is to make his treasures a universal possession, getting the humblest people to read the greatest books ; or of the student of philosophy who tries to make the thoughts of the supreme minds of the race available for solving the daily problems of the neighborhood : or of the student of theology who would make theology religious, so that the doctrines which on the one hand touch the heavens shall on the other hand touch the earth, and be the means of communication between the two, bringing heaven down and lifting men up to meet it, vitally and actually influencing and determining life.

The wisdom of the wise men, thus evidenced in the use that they made of their eyes and of their feet, was further shown in the employment of their hands. They came with gifts, with gold and frankincense and myrrh.

These offerings have long been associated with mystical meanings.

“ They laid their offerings at His feet :
 The gold was their tribute to a king,
 The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
 Was for the Priest, the Paraclete,
 The myrrh for the body's burying.”

Let us, indeed, read into the beautiful story all that we can of holy significance. He who lay in the cradle beneath the star at the end

of the journey was worthy of all that they could bring. And, no doubt, they brought the best they could, the best fruits of their own land. After all is said, that is the heart of it: they brought their best and laid it at His feet, and themselves with it.

Let us not blame them if they hesitate a moment at the top of the street. There they are with their camels and their finery, in the grand fashion of the splendid pictures, kings seeking a king. And this is no street for the dwelling of a king,—this back street set about on either side with the narrow and commonplace houses of the poor. It means much that they went on and in. And when they were in, what did they see? A peasant mother, the wife of a country carpenter, and her new-born child. Surely, it could not be for this that the star had shone in the east: it could not be for this that these sages had left their contemplations, that these persons of importance had journeyed over the long deserts. But the men who had recognized the star, recognized also the Lord of the star. Nothing else in the story so declares their wisdom as their kneeling down before this little speechless child and offering their gifts. The star itself was not so wonderful as that.

To see the truth beneath the surface, to per-

ceive the large importance of small things, to discern the preciousness of the commonplace, to behold with wise reverence that which the man in the street passes by unheeding, to find God in the unpromising listeners of humanity—this is the work and the reward of the scholar.

When one undertakes a common task, and so performs it as to bring out its divine meanings, finding its relation to both God and man, he partakes of the wisdom of the wise men. He whom they sought across the deserts can be found in anybody's office, or study or sitting-room.

When one enters into the common life, resolved to live it in the spirit of Jesus, bringing into all its occupations, even the homeliest, the faithfulness, the thoroughness, the courtesy, the consideration, the gentleness, of ideal demeanor, then to him is given, in answer to his gift, the blessing of the wise men, and under his own roof, though the street he lives in be as narrow as that in which the carpenter and his family were lodged, the Lord Christ shall appear daily.

When one puts off his hat within the door of the church,—though it be the plainest of churches with the simplest of congregations,—when he kneels there and calls upon Him who

has promised His especial benediction in the assembly of the faithful, he bows beside the wise men of the Epiphany. Like them, he looks through that which is seen to that which is unseen, and perceives the presence of the Eternal.

Into that presence, recognized and realized, the wise man brings his gifts,—the best that he has of strength, of facility, of experience, of material means, of influence among his fellows,—and in the silence, kneeling and praying, he holds out his hands, as the wise men did of old, and offers all, all that he has and is, to the supreme master of his soul.

THE PROGRESS OF ANDREW.

One of the two which heard John speak and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.—*John* 1 : 43.

EVERYBODY knew Simon Peter. By the time this history was written he had become a man of renown. Wherever the Christian religion went, the fame of Simon Peter went with it. He was not a scholar, nor an orator, still less was he a genius, like St. Paul: his letters show that. But he had the gift of leadership; and he led, as the leader will. For the true leader depends not on any election or appointment, he leads by temperament, by instinct, because he cannot help it. Thus Simon Peter, at the beginning of things led; and the others followed. And everybody knew who he was.

Andrew was Simon Peter's brother. It is plain that the historian felt that in presenting Andrew he was introducing an obscure person of whom he must give some account. So he proceeded, like a good reasoner, from the known to the unknown, and said that he was his brother's brother.

This makes Andrew our example. For the world is mostly inhabited by obscure persons ;

congregations are largely composed of obscure persons. Andrew is like us. He is our brother, as well as Simon Peter's. Most of us, I suppose, would feel some constraint in the company of Simon Peter. But Andrew we could ask to dinner without ceremony: and let the children come to the table. And that night, after he had gone, we would say, He is a saint, and yet he is a human being just like us. And we would make a great resolution to be like him. Andrew was a plain, human, ordinary, approachable, and friendly saint. This was the man who heard John speak.

He heard John speak, but not by chance. The words came with dramatic punctuality, just as the hour struck. All of the man's past experience culminated in that supreme moment, and his whole future was determined by it.

There were other men that day in whose hearing the same words were spoken, but who went on, paying no heed. The sentence which changed Andrew's life made no difference in them, left no impression upon them. In a little while, they forgot it altogether; and if that night they looked back over the day, remembering the various things which had happened to them, of one sort or another, good or bad, it is not likely that these words were counted in. Breakfast and dinner would ap-

pear as events of some importance, leaving marks in the memory, but the sermon which John the Baptist preached would be but a dim and blurred remembrance. He did say something; and he certainly did look very queer in that absurd skin of a camel. What did he say? What did he say? And so, to sleep. But Andrew lay awake all night, saying the words over and over to himself,—Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! Because the words meant to Andrew more than they meant to any of the careless crowd. Day by day he had been preparing to hear them. All his past life had led up to them. They were interpreted to him by his whole spiritual experience.

For the difference between different people is not due altogether to the unequal distribution of opportunity. Everybody has his opportunity. Sometimes a man comes up out of the most unpromising conditions and puts to shame a whole multitude of his better born and better bred brethren, and casts suspicion on our fine theories of heredity and of environment. He seemed to have no chance, and yet he became a man indeed, a hero and a benefactor of his fellow men; while any number of his neighbors, who seemed to have all things on their side and in their favor, failed

and did more harm than good. The difference is not made by much or by little opportunity, but by the recognition or the lack of recognition of it. It comes; and one is blind and deaf, while by his side another hears and sees. And the recognition depends on past experience, on the character which has been constructed day by day.

Thus there are books which have altogether changed men's lives. They read them, and the gates of a new world opened as they turned the pages. Other readers began these books at the first page and read them patiently to the last word, and made marks on the margin as they went along, and then put them away on a shelf in their library, and forgot all about them. Some said that they were dull books, and hard to read. But to a few they were the word of God: to them God spoke out of the printed page, and they heard what He said, and took it into their lives and lived it. This they did because they were prepared to read. It is Andrew's story over again.

How did Andrew do it? That is what we want to know. How did he come to attend so much more closely than other men to the word of John the Baptist? How did he make his way, where we would also enter, into the presence of the Master of the Soul?

Andrew was a fisherman who thought about something besides fish. That was the first stage in his progress.

The fact is made plain by his attendance here, at the Jordan ferry, so many miles from home, among the disciples of John the Baptist. It does not imply that there was in him any lack of attention to business. He was no dreamy angler, who fished against his will, without much luck, watching the clouds rather than the nets. So far as we may guess at him, from the brief record, he appears to have been among the more enterprising of the citizens of the fishing town in which he lived. He did not go into the ministry because he had no head for business. He had probably come down from Galilee to the cities of Judea, with John and Peter, on a business errand, to sell the catch. For such a mission, a man would be chosen who had judgment and energy, who knew men and could make a bargain. Even thus he appears as more than a mere pursuer of fish. But now, we may conjecture, the bartering is over, and according to the quiet, slow way of that long-ago time, there are some days to spare, and down goes Andrew from the fish stalls to hear John the Baptist preach. His mind was not altogether given over to fish.

That, we may say, was the beginning of the difference between Andrew and most other men of his occupation and acquaintance. The streets were full of busy folk in those times, as they are to-day, who were intent with hands and eyes and ears and minds and souls upon their daily tasks. They were absorbed in business. They had no time or thought for any other thing in life. There were men whom Andrew knew, any number of them, decent enough, properly behaved, present in the synagogue every pleasant Sabbath day, but who did almost nothing else but fish, who were not really interested in anything but fish. In Boston, under the dome of the state-house, hangs the figure of a fish, a symbol of the industry by which the citizens in the colonial times made themselves rich. It is to Massachusetts what the golden fleece was to the Netherlands. That would have precisely suited Reuben, and Simeon and Levi and Judah, and most of the other men whose boats were in the Sea of Galilee. They would have hung a golden fish in the Capernaum synagogue.

If they ever heard it said, years after, that one of their companions, John, the son of Zebedee, had written a book in which he pictured heaven as a place in which there was no more

sea, and consequently no more fish, they must have received the assertion with amazement or amusement. Their idea of beatific happiness included a stout boat, and a strong net, and a good haul of fish.

Other men were equally absorbed in other ways: some in their shops, some in their books. Down went their eyes towards their bargains or their parchments, and down went their minds in the same direction. Human nature was not greatly different from that with which we are at present acquainted. Andrew, too, was profoundly interested in his daily work, as every honest and earnest man should be, but it did not constitute the sum and substance of his life. He thought of other things beside.

That was the first stage in Andrew's progress. The next advance he made was in the choice of his friends.

Andrew found a few like-minded friends, most of them fisherfolk, like himself. There was his brother, Simon Peter, and their partners, two other brothers, James and John. Philip was their neighbor. And Philip brought into the little group, a friend of his, Nathaniel. These six young men, we may guess, had known each other since they were boys. A notable group, who are still remem-

44 THE HUMAN NATURE OF THE SAINTS.

bered after all the changing centuries; who made up an exact half of the twelve apostles, the friends of Jesus: this was the company which Andrew kept.

These young men talked together every day; sometimes, no doubt, about the fish, and the weather, and their neighbors, as human beings will, but often, it is plain, about the supreme matter, about those high subjects which we include under the head of religion. They had much confidential, sympathetic, religious talk together. When such young fellows, out on the water fishing, talk with their associates of the eternal realities, and discuss them with their own brothers, we may be sure that they mean what they say, and are in earnest about it. For it is easy enough to talk religion in a pulpit, or in any place where one may stand up by himself and make a set speech in a conventional voice. But in common, daily conversation, where we must speak familiarly, our actual selves appear. Any affectation or unreality rings false.

These were Andrew's friends, these alert young business men, who cared as he did not for their business only but for the wide world's business, and who talked of things worth talking about while they waited for the fish. Thus they helped one another; he assisted them, and

they encouraged him. That is the meaning and the purpose of all society. The wise man, who looks out of the windows of his office or his shop, makes friends with other men who like to work by a window. And they compare experiences, one having seen this, and another having seen that, and thus each man looks out of many windows, and sees life in many aspects. Thus it was that Jesus promised the blessing of His special presence to the group rather than to the individual.

The beginning, then, of Andrew's progress was in the largeness of his interests ; and the next step was in the helpfulness of his friends. The third stage was in the fact that he was not contented.

We may easily read between the lines that these young men were deeply dissatisfied both with the prevailing condition of the church and with themselves. For by and by, when Andrew hears John speak and follows Jesus, at once he hastens to his brother Simon, crying: "We have found Him!" And with the same announcement, in precisely the same words, Philip greets Nathaniel: "We have found Him!" Whom have they found? Evidently they had found Him for whom their hearts had longed, about whose coming they had conversed in their fraternal conferences,

at the meetings of that primitive brotherhood of six, out of which came the Christian church. They had found at last the knight, the sage, the saint, the hero of their dreams : the leader, the teacher, the reformer of all that was mean and unworthy within them and about them,—the Messiah who should deliver Israel, and more than Israel. They were in search of larger truth, had their hearts and minds receptively open, wished to be better men and to please God, and to be taught how.

Thus they took all that the synagogue could give them, and made the most of it. And out of the services they carried home great sentences read from the Word of God, and made new sermons about them : better sermons than anybody in the synagogue could preach, because they were their own, and dealt with their own difficulties, their own short-comings, and their own ideals.

When they heard that there was a new preacher, standing at the ford of the Jordan, and addressing all passengers, no matter who they were, with an impartial reminder of their sins, they went to hear Him. At least, Andrew went, and John. This they did, because it was consistent with their daily habit. It was the kind of thing which they were always doing : looking for more truth, listening for

messages from heaven. The streets and markets were crowded with contented people, looking for nothing except their daily bread. There they were when John the Baptist began to preach; and there they were, the same people, in the same place, when he stopped preaching: still as a stagnant pond. Not a word touched them; the great winds of God were blowing out of all the clouds; but where they were the air never so much as stirred. These were the people whom Andrew left behind when he went to hear the sermon at the river.

Then, the day after, as Andrew stood in the company of the new master, Jesus of Nazareth passed by, and Andrew saw Him. John the Baptist pointed Him out: Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! So there He was, for whom Andrew had been looking all his life. Year by year he had been making himself ready for that day; he had been preparing himself for that opportunity; he had been learning to recognize Christ when he saw Him. Others who had come out with him heard John speak, but they did not understand. Andrew understood and followed. He was looking for the best, and he found the best.

You see, that all this is possible for us, because it was possible for him: it was within

the reach of a person like ourselves. We cannot, indeed, enter as he did into the visible presence of our Lord ; but we can find Him just as truly, we can be just as sure of Him, we can be blessed with the same blessing.

Let us take Andrew's road. Let us steadily maintain an interest in something higher than our daily business ; let us enrich ourselves with precious friendships ; let us be persistently intent on the attainment of the best, reading the best books, thinking the best thoughts, following the best light we have, doing our best. So shall we come into the supreme revelation : we shall know Him whom to know is strength and joy and life eternal.

THE DAMNATION OF DIVES.

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.—*Luke*
16:23.

HE has no name. He is called the rich man; or, as it stood in Latin, Dives. It is the beggar who is named. It is true that the rich man in his lack of a name resembles most of the other people of the parables. Our Lord almost never named the characters which He introduced into these illustrative stories. But He did name the beggar. So that there is here presented this interesting contrast: everybody knows the names of rich men, few know the names of beggars; but there was a certain rich man whose name is not mentioned, and there lay at his gate, in dire poverty and pain, a certain beggar named Lazarus.

It is a small thing, and may be without meaning. The beggar may have been an actual person, whom our Lord knew. Jesus was the friend of the residents of the street, and must have been acquainted with a good many beggars. The beggar may have died that day, in his rags and sores, altogether a pitiable person as it seemed; and Jesus may

have meant to show His disciples that he was a spiritual prince in disguise. There He had sat at the corner of the street who was in truth fit for the society of Abraham.

Or perhaps this distinction of a name, denied to Dives and given to Lazarus, signifies the difference between Christ's way of regarding men and the common way. It is an illustration of His disregard of things artificial, external and inconsequent. A friendless beggar, covered with sores, and consorting with street dogs, was at no disadvantage in our Lord's sight compared with a rich man, clad in silk attire, sitting at the head of his handsome table. If the beggar were rich in the imperishable treasure, and the rich man were poor in the currency of heaven, that made a distinction which reversed all common estimates.

At last, to Lazarus on the curbstone, and to the nameless rich man in his palace, came the messenger who has no respect of persons: they both died. The beggar died, and so far as this earth was concerned, that was the end of him. The rich man, when he died, "was buried"; that is, with ceremony. He had a stately funeral. So they slept, the rich man and the beggar, and awoke in the world beyond. But there, what an amazing change.

The beggar was in Abraham's bosom. There he sat among the saints and patriarchs, in a place of honor. It is a domestic picture, quite different from the stately visions of Isaiah and St. John, with their smoke of incense, and dim forms of worshipers, and cherubim with sheltering wings, and in the midst One high and lifted up. Or shall we say that this is a glimpse not of the heaven of the church triumphant but of the paradise of the church expectant? Anyhow, the beggar is a person of importance in that company. The table is spread and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are sitting down to supper, and there is the beggar in Abraham's bosom. The phrase is to be understood by comparison with the account of the Last Supper, where the apostle whom Jesus loved leaned on His breast. That is, in the fashion of that day and place, they reclined on couches at their meals, each resting on his left arm: first the host, then next to him, leaning on his breast, the person of most honor. There was the beggar. But as for the rich man, "in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments." Over the way, in plain sight of the supper table of the saints, with a deep cleft between, burned the flames of the pit unquenchable. And the beggar looked that way, and there

was Dives. That fine gentleman, that hospitable host and eminent citizen—the mendicant, who asked for alms beside the road is better off than he. To such a pass has come that easy, successful, and delightful life.

Was it because the man was rich? Was that the offense for which he fell into this deep misery?

It is true that our Lord said some things about the rich which they who have great possessions must find hard reading. It is said that the eye of the needle was a narrow passage between rocks, which a camel could squeeze through: but even then, the illustration is not a reassuring one. It must be remembered, however, on the other hand, that Jesus chose one group of His nearest friends from among the very rich. We read the story of Mary and Martha in the light of our New England domestic life, and they appear to be maiden ladies, in somewhat straightened circumstances, who are doing their own housework. But the incident of the alabaster box shows them in quite a different aspect. Here is one who would bring to the Master some token of her reverence and love. In her room, among the curious ornaments upon her dressing-table, is an alabaster box of very precious ointment. The disciples, whispering among

themselves, and guessing at its value, make it out to be worth at least three hundred pence; and since a penny, as we learn elsewhere, was a fair days' wage, that would represent several hundred dollars. This she takes, and breaks it at His feet. It is plain that this is no family of narrow means. Mary and Martha, very near friends of Jesus, were as rich as Dives. It is true that there was a Lazarus, who was a beggar in the street; but there was also a Lazarus who was a man of wealth. He was rich like Dives, and was a friend of Jesus.

There is spiritual danger connected with the possession of wealth. The Bible has great fears about men who have large means; but they are like the fears of the insurance companies about men who work in powder mills. The insurance companies have no personal dislike to these men. They do not by any means assert that such men will certainly be blown to pieces. But they know that a powder mill did explode the other day, and that other powder mills have exploded before, and they decline to take the risk.

The rich man is in spiritual danger because it is so easy and natural for him to be wholly occupied with things temporal and material. Where his treasure is, there will his heart be also. His thought and life will be filled with

the consideration of that which can be seen and felt and weighed and measured and counted. No man makes a great deal of money without giving his mind to it. And it is plainly possible to give one's mind so lavishly and unreservedly to this business that there is no interest or attention left for anything else. Indeed, to one who is entirely occupied with these matters, the enthusiasms, enjoyments, and purposes of religion must in the nature of things seem rather vague, and hard to understand. He is concerned with the present and the practical. When he is invited, like the man in the other parable, to a great supper which is the type of spiritual privilege, he says at once, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee, have me excused"; or "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee, have me excused." That is, the man of wealth,—who has got it and so is a rich man actually, or who is trying to get it and so is a rich man potentially—is in danger of caring for nothing else. That is the temptation: and the more money a man has the better he knows how strong the temptation is.

But no man will lose his soul because he has a great deal of money. The day of judgment will not be a time for the examination of men's

bank accounts. There is no wickedness in being wealthy. Some people talk as if prosperity ought to be punished, and as if everybody ought to sell whatever he possesses and make it over to the poor. It is true that the Master did set that duty at one man's door: no doubt, because He saw that that was exactly what that particular young man needed for his soul's health. But He preached no such doctrine to other rich men whom he met. The damnation of Dives was not a punishment for being rich.

What then? He had always had a good time,—was that it? Was it there that he made his failure?

The pleasures of the rich man are recounted in the parable. He wore good clothes, attiring himself in the handsome and fashionable purple and fine linen of his time. He fared sumptuously, giving and receiving banquets: and living in luxury every day.

And it is plain that there is spiritual danger in such a life as this. It is not only the pursuit of wealth but the enjoyment of it which menaces the soul. This is written large in history, where again and again in the experience of races, of churches, and of institutions, increase of pleasure has been accompanied by decrease of piety. They have been given their desire, as it says in the psalm, and leanness withal has

entered into their soul. So it has been with nations, which have become rich, and have entered into the joys which wealth makes possible, and then have fallen before some simpler people, who are strong with the sturdy strength of plain living. So it has been with monasteries, which have begun in the fear of God and in the spirit of self-sacrifice, in holy poverty, and then becoming rich with the gifts of their grateful neighbors, have grown idle and negligent, eating and drinking more and praying less, till they have come to be a shame and a scandal. And the same temptations assail all prosperous persons. They who are contented with their surroundings are easily contented with themselves, and that is the end of spiritual growth. It was with knowledge of human nature that the petition was put in the litany, "In all time of our prosperity, good Lord, deliver us." Indeed, if we look for disregard of religion, for lives lived without much thought of God, for days begun without prayer and weeks begun without praise, for devotion to that which is temporal and neglect of that which is eternal, we will find too much of it among those to whom God has given unusual privileges and set them in the midst of pleasures.

But to be happy is no sin. God has put us

in this world that we may live this life. It is His will that we take from His generous hand all the good pleasure that there is: this world's pleasure now, and the next world's pleasure when we come to it. All happiness of soul and mind and sense to-day, and all new happiness which awaits us under new conditions to-morrow. There is no merit in being miserable. There is no contradiction between a smiling face and the sermon on the mount. The Christian religion sanctions and approves of every good natural pleasure which has ever entered into the heart of man. No doubt but the rich man's life was merry and joyful. But that was not what was the matter with him. The damnation of Dives was not a punishment for having lived a pleasant life.

Why was it, then, that in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments? He was a rich man: but that was not it. He was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day: but that was not it. Why did he lose his soul? Dives lost his soul because, being rich and happy, he had been satisfied with that. He had found the material side of life so pleasant that he had been content to live simply on that plane. He had encountered the perils of prosperity, and had suffered spiritual defeat.

When he asks that Lazarus may be sent over with a drop of water to cool his tongue, he is answered, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." That seems for a moment to mean that there is for each of us a fixed amount of good and evil fortune, and that if we have pleasure and prosperity here, we must not look for pleasure and prosperity hereafter. But there is plainly some mistake about that. Our Lord did not mean that. That is not His doctrine of the providence of God. That is not His interpretation of the fatherhood of God.

No; the words are to be understood like the sentence in the sermon on the mount, "They have their reward." The men who give alms or say prayers in order to be seen of men have their reward, such as it is. The people who devote themselves entirely to the material satisfactions of life receive their good things. They enjoy the blessings of the senses. Dives had received his good things. He had decided, consciously or unconsciously, that what he supremely desired was to succeed in business and to have a good time in society. That is what he desired, and he got it. He makes his confession in his prayer for his five

brothers. There they are living the same kind of life which he had lived, and coming inevitably, if they keep on, to the same place. They are receiving their good things. And their good things are of the sort to which death puts an end. Presently they will die, and at that moment everything that they possess will perish: because everything that they possess is perishable. There they go, briskly and gayly walking towards the brink of the place of torment. And there are Moses and the prophets standing by the side of the road and telling them plainly, but in vain, where the road ends. That is, there is the church and the ministers of religion teaching day by day that he who seeks the pleasures of the senses only, shall have the pleasures of the senses only, and after that the judgment. The rich man had heard their sermons in a dull, conventional, confused way, with his eyes shut: but they had meant nothing to him. Moses and the prophets had been no more to him than the saints of the painted windows.

That is, the life which ended in this total failure had been a life of the body only. That was the cause of the damnation of Dives. The man had lost his soul because he had never taken the slightest pains to save his soul. He had no place with Abraham and Isaac and

Jacob because he had never taken the least interest in the things that patriarchs and prophets, and men of God care for. He was no more fitted for that excellent company than a tramp on a freight-car would be fitted for a lecture in philosophy. He had addressed himself wholly to that which gratifies the senses. To the higher part of his nature, to that which survives the body and is everlasting, he had paid no heed. And he went to his own place, as they said of Judas. That is what happened to him. He went to his own place, where he properly belonged, as we all will.

It is an illustration of the great saying: Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Dives had sown to the flesh and of the flesh had reaped corruption. Lazarus had sown to the spirit, and of the spirit had reaped life everlasting.

THE REALITY OF THE TEMPTATION.

And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.—*Mark 1 : 12.*

OUR Lord went into the wilderness in order to be alone to think.

He had come from Nazareth to the bank of the Jordan to hear a new prophet preach. Hundreds of others had come upon the same errand. The crowd was great, and He was an unnoticed member of it. Even when John the Baptist said, "There standeth One among you whom ye know not," nobody looked at Him. It is not likely that He Himself realized that the words meant Him. He looked about, like His neighbors, wondering who the Great Unknown might be. It is true that when the prophet presently addressed Him, He met the marvelous announcement with entire composure. "Suffer it," He said, "to be so now." But the event of the temptation seems to show that He was taken by surprise. If He had come prepared for this, expecting this, there would have been no need of the wilderness. The story would have gone on, as indeed it does in St. John's Gospel, without a

break : after the baptism, not the temptation, but at once the ministry.

Out of the Galilean hills He had come down, this carpenter of Nazareth, being now thirty years of age,—a maker of doors, who was Himself to be the door of life eternal ; a framer of windows, who was to open the windows of heaven for revelation and for benediction ; a builder of houses, who was to prepare mansions in the celestial country. And as He stood, in all humility, amongst the throng, John had singled Him out. That great prophet, that new Elijah, to whose preaching even the Pharisees were for the moment giving their attention, had suddenly stopped in his sermon at the sight of this working man from Galilee, and had pronounced Him his spiritual superior : “ This is He of whom I spoke : this is He of whom I said that ye knew Him not, and whom I knew not till the light in the sky and in His face revealed Him : this is He whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.” And from above had come a vision and a voice, verifying it all.

“ And immediately,”—for here is where the note of time is touched,—“ the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness.” The Spirit spoke in the silence of His soul. He was conscious of an inner compulsion. He heard an in-

audible but none the less imperative voice, saying, "Go, get you away into the wilderness"; and He obeyed, and went. That was what followed the strange utterance of John the Baptist, and the strange sense of recognition with which Jesus met it. He went into the wilderness to think.

The gospel records and our own reflections assure us that Jesus must have learned who He was, little by little. The statement that He increased in wisdom is a certificate of that. And the fact that unless He had increased in wisdom He would have been no true human man emphasizes it. It must be remembered that the doctrine of the incarnation is not a doctrine of the divinity of Christ only. Men have held the doctrine of the divinity of Christ with all ardor and adoration, who have nevertheless been pronounced heretics by general councils of the church because they have omitted or obscured the truth of His humanity. They have made it out that being God, He was somehow other than a human man. The doctrine of the incarnation asserts the divinity and the humanity of Christ at the same time. It is essential to it that Jesus Christ was truly man. He could not have been truly man if as He sat among the boys in the schoolroom at Nazareth, He had been

composing the Sermon on the Mount. He could not have been truly man, if He had known at the beginning what He knew at the end of His ministry. He increased in wisdom, day by day learning more about the world in which He lived, more about the humanity of which He had become a part, more about God in whose favor He grew continually, more about Himself.

And now to-day beside the Jordan are strange voices saying strange things. And there is a strange new consciousness in His own heart, a consciousness of power, of personality, of possibility, such as He has never had before. Long ago among the hills, looking out over the green plain, He had had long thoughts, as a boy will, but they had been the thoughts of a boy. Working in His shop, among the shavings, breathing the clean sweet odor of the wood, He had seen visions, the visions of a vigorous young manhood. But this which fills His mind and heart to-day is a new thing. The moment is one of crisis. A great, new, marvelous truth has entered into His life. And He is saying over and over to Himself, again and again, trying to understand it in the fulness of its infinite meaning, "I am the Messiah! I am the Christ! I am He for whom society has all along been look-

ing and waiting ! I am come in answer to the prayers of the ages ! I am the servant of the Highest, the ambassador of heaven, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world ! ”

It is plain that a man cannot go about the streets saying such words. It is plain that he cannot go back to his day's work for his day's wages, making carts and mending roofs. The great message has set a sharp separation between this day and all the other past days. What shall He do ? He must get away. He must seek solitude ; He must find a place where He can think and pray and plan. He must adjust Himself to a new life. The summons of the spirit is very urgent,—of His own spirit, and of God's spirit. He is immediately driven into the wilderness.

And then, what happens ? He is tempted. And tempted to do what ? To turn stones into bread, to cast Himself from a pinnacle of the temple, and to kneel down before the devil. What does it mean ? Where is the connection between the desert and the river, between the temptation and the baptism, between these very different voices,—one from above saying, “ This is My beloved Son,” the other from beneath saying, “ If Thou art the Son of God ” do this and that ? The two belong together, like the light and the shadow. Our Lord is

entering here into a universal human experience. This is the common spiritual sequence. First, the high ideal, recognized and resolved upon: the new life entered: the supreme choice definitely made. Then depression, doubt, discouragement, asking of anxious questions.

Elijah, for example, confronts the priests of Baal. In a land forgetful of God, indifferent to Him, defiant of Him, he stands up suddenly alone, splendidly bold, on God's side. Then he goes away, and hides himself in a desolate wilderness, and cries aloud to the rocks and the sky that his life is a miserable failure. There they are, the two voices, from above and from beneath. Elijah had his baptism, in the rain which came down in answer to his prayer, and then, in the desert, his temptation followed.

You know that there are three significant years in the life of St. Paul of which we are told nothing. He beholds the heavenly vision, which suddenly stands like a pillar of fire between his past and his future; in Damascus, he learns in detail the truth which from that moment changes his whole life. And what does he do then? He goes into Arabia. He takes himself out of the sight of all men, whether Jews or Christians, out of the hearing of all

human voices, into the bleak desert, into the land of rocks and solitude. And there he stays three years. In the history of his life the space of these three years is blank, totally blank. So far as we know, St. Paul never spoke of that experience: he never told what happened. But we may guess. He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. This new truth, which summons you to contradict all that you have said and stood for, which calls you to a career of poverty and difficulty and tragedy,—is it true? May there not be some mistake about it? And if it is true, what does it mean? What does it mean for you? The apostle went into the desert to meet the devil. And the devil asked him these questions. And it took the apostle three years to answer them. That was His temptation in the wilderness. First, the heavenly vision on the Damascus road; then the long contention with doubt and desire and the devil in Arabia.

It all belongs to human experience. Jesus Christ, in His temptation, shares our common life. We understand Him, and He understands us the better for it.

“I am the Son of God,” He says, over and over; “I am the Son of God.” Are you the Son of God? Are you sure of it? You poor country

carpenter, bred among the hills and fields, thirty years old and up to this hour quite without achievement, are you the Son of God? The splendid affirmation changes into inquiry. The sun of assurance goes behind the clouds of doubt. The great truth is too great even for the great man. "If," he begins to say, "if," "if." If you are the Son of God, prove it to yourself: make these stones into loaves of bread. If you are the Son of God, prove it to the people: go, leap from a turret of the temple, and let God your Father send His angels to catch you in their hands.

You see how natural, how logical, how inevitable the temptation was. The great truth about Himself comes for the first time in its fulness of meaning, in its fulness of consequence, before the human mind of Jesus, with all that it implies of change, and responsibility, and mission, and leadership, and divinity, and tragedy, and He goes away where He can be alone to think about it, and as He thinks, these are His thoughts, these great temptations.

They begin with doubt, but they do not stay there. The first temptation and the second open with the word "if": but there is no "if" in the third. He has got past doubt. He knows now that He is verily the Son of God.

But being the Son of God, what shall He do? How shall He live His life? If I am the Son of God, what is the Kingdom of God? Is it meat and drink, or is it righteousness and truth? Is it a material kingdom, as everybody thinks, or a spiritual kingdom? If I am the Son of God, and the Kingdom of God is the reign of righteousness and truth, how shall I set about to advance it? Shall I speak in the common words of the synagogue and of the street, using in truth's behalf only the compulsion of the truth, or shall I enforce truth by appealing to men's sense of wonder, appearing to them descending from the clouds? Shall I preach ideal righteousness, and insist that men shall live in an ideal way, setting them an example, heedless whether it be accounted wise or foolish, practicable or impracticable; or shall I accommodate myself to the actual conditions, taking men as they are, and for the impossible best substituting the possible good; shall I not for the general good come to some reasonable understanding with the devil?

These were some of the questions which are represented by the three temptations: natural questions, difficult questions,—difficult because, as the phrase is, there is so much to be said on both sides. They were essential questions.

Before He speaks a word aloud, these must be settled. There He was in the wilderness, fighting these things out.

Our Lord was actually tempted. That is the initial fact. He was tempted like as we are.

The record of the temptations makes it sufficiently plain that what we have here is a parable rather than a history, or a picture rather than a page from a diary. This appears, for instance, in the part which is here taken by the devil. The devil is represented as personally encountering the Master. He points to the smooth stones; he transports Jesus first to the top of the temple and then to the top of the hill, and on these eminences he stands beside Him, talking with Him. This, unless it has a meaning deeper than appears upon the surface, takes out of the temptation all of its reality. From the instant when the devil actually appears upon the scene, the temptation ceases to be a temptation. For it is essential to a genuine temptation that it must be tempting. There must be something so attractive about it, so deceptive, so persuasive, that even a good man shall feel inclined to accept its invitation. The choice which we all make, sinners though we are, is not between the known good and the known bad: it is be-

tween two courses of action each of which appears to be good. It is very rarely that we sin, saying boldly to ourselves, "This is plainly in defiance of the will of God, but I will do it." No, we somehow persuade ourselves that darkness is light, and evil is good. We do the bidding of the devil, but in order to get us to do it he has to disguise himself so that we may not recognize him. If the devil came, the plain devil, and said, "Do this," we would not do it. It is not in that manner that we are tempted. Still less, was Christ thus tempted. The sight of the tempter, the consequent knowledge that the suggestion of his pointing finger was the suggestion of evil, would have made any true temptation totally impossible.

The account of our Lord's temptation is therefore to be compared with that other word where He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." What did that mean? Plainly it meant the ultimate defeat of error. The disciples came and told the Master that they had gone ministering to men as He had instructed them, and that the effects were remarkable. "Lord," they said, "even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name." "Yes," He answered, "while you were gone, I saw the great devil himself fall out of the

sky." That is, I saw the power of evil cast down from his high seat.

After the temptation in the wilderness Jesus tried to make His disciples understand it. He had been grievously tempted, tempted to doubt His own personality, tempted to depart now in this direction, and now in that, from His high ideal. He wished to help His disciples, partly by showing them that He was able to have sympathy with them in their own temptations, and partly by assuring them from His own experience that it was possible to resist even the mightiest, even the subtlest of temptations. And He did it, not in our occidental fashion, but in the natural manner of His own time and land. He did it by a parable, or a picture. He did it, that is, in a way to appeal to all people of all lands and times. The devil came, He said, and spoke to Me.

True? It was more profoundly true—yes, in the best sense, more practically true—than all the accurate statements of all the arithmetic and history that have been written since the children of Cain built the first city. Let us diligently disabuse our minds of the false and misleading notion that nothing is true except the verifiable assertions of plain prose. Poetry is true, pictures are true, even fiction is true, whenever the poet or the artist or the

author tells the truth. Not the fact: that is another and a lesser matter. The first chapters of the first Book of Chronicles are filled with facts: there is nothing there but facts. And nobody can read them. "And the sons of Caleb, the brother of Jerahmeel were Mesha his first-born which was the father of Ziph, and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. And the sons of Hebron; Korah and Tappuah and Rekem and Shema. And Shema begat Raham the father of Jorkoam; and Rekem begat Shammai." So it goes on, one hard name after another interminably: fact upon fact. The parable of the prodigal son, on the other hand, has not a fact in it, from beginning to end. There was no prodigal son; there was no famine; there was no father, no fatted calf, no elder brother. This was a beautiful story which Jesus told; and He made it up, every word of it. But it is nevertheless so true,—so vitally, so eternally, so searchingly and blessedly true,—that all the studious saints from the beginning of the gospel to this present day, have not discovered all its truth. Nothing can be more true than the parable of the prodigal son.

So it is with the story of the temptation of Christ. It has no place in the world of fact. Taken literally, it never happened. Jesus and

the devil never stood side by side looking down upon the hard paving-stones of the courtyard of the temple. And Jesus never intended us to think for a moment that they did. When we read the record as if it were an account in a newspaper, He asks us, as He asked His disciples on a like occasion, How is it that ye do not understand? The temptation belongs not to the world of statistical fact but to the world of spiritual truth. It is the report of an experience so tremendous that it could not be told in the common terms of every-day narration. Every word of it is true; every syllable of it is true; but its meaning is not upon the surface, but beneath it. The longer we live, the longer the race lives, the more we understand how true the story of the temptation is.

Jesus Christ was both truly and sorely tempted, in the wilderness and out of it. It is significantly said at the end of one of the accounts of the temptation that "the devil departed from Him for a season." Yes, for a season, coming back again, with new perplexities, new problems, new deceptions. Once our Lord spoke of His whole ministry as a series of temptations, saying to His disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." It is even said of Him,

in words much bolder than we would venture to use to-day, that He learned obedience by the things which He suffered : as if, even for Him, obedience was a lesson hard to learn. He had to learn it, as we do, taught by the divine tuition of painful experience. We commonly think of Him as being so perfectly good by birth and nature that He never had to try. But the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that He did have to try, and try hard. And the story of the temptation illustrates it. "We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities : but was in all points tempted like as we are." It is true that the writer immediately adds, "Yet without sin." But it is plain that He was not easily without sin. He conquered in the wilderness, and in every other place, but never without a battle.

The story that is written in glowing color in the Boston Public Library is not the only story of the Holy Grail. Galahad is not the only hero of that mediæval legend. It is told to the accompaniment of solemn music how Parsifal achieved the Grail. The most significant difference between the two is that Galahad wins with ease, but Parsifal with difficulty. Galahad is born good, and stays good, and never meets a champion who does him any

serious hurt. On he goes, serene and confident, as if the quest of the Grail were but a summer journey along a shady lane. But Parsifal is one of us. He has our human nature. He fights our human battles, while we hold our breath wondering whether he will win or not; he meets our own temptations and finds them terribly hard, as we do, struggles with them, wrestles with them, is weary and heavy-laden, hurt and bleeding. When he achieves the vision of the Grail, it is not with smiling face and shining armor. Parsifal is the true hero of the search for the Holy Grail, not the serene Galahad.

In the story of the temptation, the Son of God shows us that He is the Son of Man. The divine master, the Lord of life, assures us that He is of our kin and kind, flesh of our flesh. He suffers with us, as well as for us: and is perfectly good, but not easily good.

Yet Christ is at the same time divine; He is the express image of the Heavenly Father; He is God, manifest in man. To such a being, how can our human temptations have reality? How can they touch Him? Did He not look on, past the eyes of the tempter, into the face of the eternal? Was not the desert crowded, rank on rank, with the horsemen and the chariots of God, ready at a word to reinforce

Him? Had He not more than twelve legions of angels at His back? Did He not know well that this was but a passing trial, an incident of the journey, as He went on to certain victory and peace? Yonder, across the narrow desert, did not the hill of the transfiguration shine? Whoever is sure that He will come safe out of the battle, may easily be brave. Was He not absolutely sure?

But read at the end how angels came and ministered unto Him. What does that mean? Plainly, it means weariness, it means distress, it means wounds to be bound up, it means that though the victory is won the victor has gained it only by desperate contention.

Jesus is God revealing Himself in man, not God disguised as man. The infinite God manifesting Himself in finite man, must of necessity subject Himself to human limitations. So He bears our sicknesses and carries our sorrows; He becomes acquainted with grief; He subjects Himself to the reality of our temptations. God cannot reveal Himself in man on any easier conditions. God can put on humanity as a cloak, and go about our streets wearing it, and looking like a man, and in that form be superior to all our ills. But that is not what we mean when we say the Nicene Creed. We mean something far more

mysterious, more intimate, more real than that. God was in Christ; the Word became flesh; the Eternal took on Him our human nature and became man. Of course, He was tempted. It was essential that He should be tempted. He could not have become man without it.

Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world by His temptation, as well as by His crucifixion. In the wilderness sin meets Him, as on the cross death meets Him; and He suffers. He conquers, but He suffers. He bruises the serpent's head, but the serpent stings His heel. Thus it is that He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows how it is. He knows by hard experience how bitter a thing it is to fight with the devil. He in whom we see God, sympathizes. He who will judge us tempted sinners, understands.

THE UNBELIEF OF THOMAS.

Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.—*John 20 : 25.*

THAT is what St. Thomas said on Easter Monday.

The central truth of the Christian religion had to win its way against the opposition of doubt. Not Thomas only but all the apostles questioned and rejected it. When Jesus said to them that after being put to death He would rise again upon the third day, they listened with dull minds, hearing His words,—which were plain enough,—but not understanding them. They asked each other privately what this resurrection from the dead could mean, but they got no satisfying answer. So slight was the impression made by the words that they appear to have forgotten them altogether. When the women came hurrying from the empty tomb, declaring that they had seen a vision of angels assuring them that Christ was risen from the dead, the apostles gave no credence to the story, accounting it an idle tale. The gospel of the resurrection was

preached to them, and they all with one consent refused to hear it.

You remember how Thomas persisted in his doubt. After all the others were convinced he still held back. Easter Day had been full of wonders. Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene, and to the little company of holy women ; He had manifested Himself to the two disciples who were walking home to Emmaus ; some time during the day, Peter had seen Him ; He had entered into the presence of the frightened disciples who were gathered that evening in the upper room and had made it plain by the sight of His nail-pierced hands and feet that it was indeed Himself. "But Thomas," we read, "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." And he refused to be convinced. The whole apostolic company together could not persuade him.

Then a week went by. The Sunday after Easter came. "And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas was with them ; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He unto Thomas : Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing."

But Thomas needs no test. The sight of the face of Christ suffices him. "And Thomas answered, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

This is the record of the unbelief of Thomas. I desire to emphasize especially these three sentences: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, I will not believe"; that tells us that Thomas was an unbeliever: "And after eight days His disciples were within, and Thomas with them"; that shows that in spite of his unbelief he continued in the apostolic company: "Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God"; thus was his unbelief changed into complete faith. The presence of the unbeliever, the conduct of the unbeliever, and the conversion of the unbeliever, are the three matters upon which I purpose to comment.

There was an unbeliever among the apostles: let us begin with that. Indeed, as I have reminded you, there were at one time among the eleven apostles as many as eleven unbelievers. Only one is now left; but he is an unbeliever in good earnest. Listen to him. He will not say, "If I can but touch His nail-pierced hands, I will believe." That would

mean that faith was at least possible. Thomas sees no possibility of faith. "I will never believe," he says, "unless I can put my finger into the print of the nails."

Part of the unbelief of Thomas was temperamental. It belonged to the nature of the man. He did not believe anything easily. He was not easily stimulated to hope, nor apt to console himself in trouble with the comforting visions of a sanguine imagination. He had not the good gift of seeing the world on its bright side. Thomas was naturally a despondent person, quick to discover difficulty, slow to believe. Everything that we are told about him shows that.

We are informed, for example, that when Jesus turned His face towards Bethany, proposing to visit the grave of Lazarus, Thomas was in despair. They had threatened in Judea to kill the Master if He dared to venture again within their borders, and He was now about to undertake that perilous journey. Thomas saw nothing but death ahead. At once his mind settled upon the worst. "Let us also go," he said, "that we may die with Him." He was a brave man, but he lacked hope.

Again, at the last supper, during our Lord's long conversation with the apostles, it was Thomas who broke in as the Master said,

“Whither I go ye know and the way ye know,” and “Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?” It was the same refusal to take things for granted, the same inability to believe that everything would somehow come out right, which he had shown before. Thomas looked into the future, and it was all black. He could see no “way” in it at all.

The temperament of Thomas constitutes him an excellent witness of the resurrection. Let us have an unbeliever in the midst of that enthusiastic company of disciples, somebody with observant and critical eyes, with a practical mind, not easily roused into belief, naturally incredulous, with an invincible conviction that dead people stay dead; give us a witness with a will of his own, whose judgment is not jostled out of its way by any crowd, however big, whose best friend cannot persuade him to believe what he does not actually and heartily believe, who resolutely refuses to credit what he has not seen with his own eyes. Here he is, in the person of Thomas.

In the pictures and the statues he is seen, a man of sober features, with brows furrowed, pondering hard questions, looking down at a measuring rule which he is holding in his hands.

See, now, how this unbeliever behaves himself in the company of the faithful, and how they conduct themselves towards him, and how Christ treats him. So long as there is unbelief among men, it will be worth while to study this relationship of the skeptic to the saints. Thomas is not dead. He is alive to-day, multiplied by thousands. We are all of us acquainted with Thomas. What shall he have to do with us, and we with him?

If the good example of the old time is to be followed, Thomas will continue in our company, and we will be glad to have him with us. His unbelief will not hinder his association with us, nor will our faith forbid him. Thomas did stay away once, and that time he missed something. The next Sunday he was in his place, and the revelation came to him.

The best thing that Thomas can do to-day is to come to church. He does not believe the central truth of Christianity; he is a heretic, he is a skeptic, he is an infidel,—but is he absolutely satisfied that he is right? Has he got quite to the end of it, and made the supreme discovery? Is he entirely sure that the creed of the ages is a lie? Has he shut his mind against the entrance of any possible new light and truth? Has he stopped thinking? Is he serenely contented?

A man who hears one side for six days, as some men do, ought to give the other side one day's hearing out of the seven. An honest man owes that to himself.

It ought to be understood that the church is not an ecclesiastical club, within whose doors only they may come who are quite congenial with all the others. It ought to be understood that the act of attendance at the services of the church does not commit one to entire accord with the church in all respects. One may be attracted by its good works, and glad to take his share in them, without being in full sympathy with its creed. He be but a little way along in the Christian life, being conscious of serious defects of character, yet setting a worthy ideal before him, and earnestly desiring to attain it. He may be an honest seeker after truth, and in perfect fairness willing to hear what they have to say who hold that the truth of the ages,—the truth that heaven is open and God is near at hand,—is true indeed. In any case, his place is in the church. If there is any truth beyond that which he has already, he will come to a knowledge of it, as Thomas did, by keeping in Christian company, by his presence in the Christian congregation.

The lesson of that Sunday after Easter

needs to be learned by believers also. Thomas is a good example, but so also is Peter, so is John, and the rest of those whose faith was sound. Thomas did not stay away, and they did not wish him to stay away. Nobody cast curious and questioning eyes upon him, asking, "Why is this unbeliever among us?" They made him welcome. This is worth thinking about.

This lesson has often been lost sight of among Christians. Thomas has many times been turned out of doors, excommunicated, and worse things done to him. Doubt has been accounted a crime. It has been held in worse esteem than the breaking of the Ten Commandments. Prisons have been prepared for it, and stakes set up in market-places, and fires kindled. That was not the spirit of the apostolic company. Nor of Him who stood there in the midst of them holding out His hands to Thomas. Jesus loved that unbelieving Thomas, as He loves all honest and earnest men everywhere. He had no wish to put him away. What He desired was to bring him nearer. He knew the love that Thomas had in his heart; and the love even of a heretic is a hundred times better than the cold faith of an orthodox believer,—St. Paul being our witness.

There is no room for any question as to the attitude of Jesus Christ towards honest doubt. When He held out His hands to Thomas there in the upper room, He made that as clear as the shining light.

At last, to unbelieving Thomas, in the apostles' company, came the revelation of the truth, and doubt was changed to faith. Down he fell upon his knees, crying, "My Lord and my God!" That was faith, indeed. None of the others had said that.

Sometimes the doubters make the best believers. When they come into the light of faith they know how to appreciate it, after the darkness. They value it more highly than those who have always lived in the light. There is a great deal of conventional believing. There are people who believe because they have never seriously considered the articles of the creed. They were taught the Christian religion, as they were taught the decent customs of Christian civilization, by their good parents. And they have gone on ever since, taking things for granted, asking no questions. There is an element of good in this. It is by no means to be expected that all Christians shall have a critical mind. It is not absolutely necessary to ask questions. Some of these contented people, however,

are like persons who live all their lives in the presence of some majestic mountain, or beautiful valley, or sublime expanse of sea, and behold daily that which others come miles to see,—behold without any real recognition, missing the sight of God. It is sometimes not a bad thing to fall into the difficulties of doubt. It breaks up conventionality. It brings us face to face with life. When we get a good hold of the truth again, we value it, as shipwrecked people value dry land.

Thomas cried, "My Lord and my God," when he saw Christ. What had converted Thomas? Was it the test which he had proposed to himself? Did he put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into the wounded side, and thus believe? No; Thomas looked into the face of Jesus, and was satisfied. He tried no tests; he asked no more than that. He saw Christ, and that was enough.

We, too, may see Christ, and the sight of Him shall help us as it helped Thomas. He speaks still in the pages of the gospels. Every day He holds out His nail-pierced hands to us. We, too, may know Him; and to know Him is to believe in Him; and to believe in Him, to serve Him and to love Him is life eternal.

BLIND BARTIMÆUS.

And it came to pass that as He was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging.—*Luke 18: 35.*

BAEDEKER'S "Palestine" has no map of Jericho. The place has long since ceased to exist. Its walls lie flatter than they were ever laid by Joshua. It was there, however, plain enough when the matter happened of which I purpose to speak. The small child was mistaken who imagined that Jericho was in heaven. It stood on solid earth; as actual and homely and familiar as any common town with which we are acquainted. We surround it with a fictitious sacredness which makes the miraculous easy and natural. We read without hesitation that a blind man's eyes were opened in Jericho. If we were told that a similar healing had been enacted in Jersey City we would regard the tale with different feelings. But to the men of that time, Jericho was like Jersey City. It offered quite as unpromising a background for a miracle.

Jericho lay in the Jordan valley. Up among the hills, at Jerusalem, the winds

blew; but it was very hot at Jericho. It is true, the place was called the City of Palms; but the palm is one of the least satisfactory of trees. Although it grows where there is great need of shade, it gives little: it is mostly stem. A single New England pine or oak is better than a grove of palms. So the sun blazed down on Jericho; and the earth was white, and most of the buildings were white, and altogether it was very trying to the eyes, and in consequence there were a great many blind men in that city.

On the day when this wonder happened, one of these blind men was sitting in the main street by one of the city gates. It was in the morning, for we know what had occurred the night before; and it was in the spring of the year, for the Passover was near at hand. Thus every sight was fair and sweet with the tender beauty of the early day and of the early season. And in the midst of it all the blind man sat as unaware of this revelation of God as were some of his dull neighbors who had eyes.

From the fact that his father's name is mentioned—Bartimæus meaning “the son of Timæus”—we may guess that he was a young man. We may also infer less certainly that he belonged to a respectable family: everybody

knew his father. One thing is plain, he was very poor. He sat by the wayside begging.

It seems to us that the lot of a blind beggar must be very hard, but there are compensations. It is said of one of the wise men of Greece that he voluntarily put out both his eyes, and then saw twice as much as anybody else in that part of the country. That was because he was thereby freed from many petty distractions, and was able to concentrate his thoughts. As for being a beggar, some of the best men that ever lived have adopted that mode of life of their own free choice, and have delighted in it. Francis of Assisi did. He preferred to be poor. It was a state of blessed independence. People talk about being independently rich, but there is such a thing as being independently poor.

Thus the blind beggar was a more privileged person than one might naturally think; he had both leisure and liberty. He had time to think, and he could think what thoughts he would.

He had much to think about, that morning. The day before there had come into the town a person about whom everybody was talking. Our Lord was now approaching the end of His ministry, and, although each day brought Him an increase of enemies, all people were greatly

interested in Him. When He came into the town, all the citizens were in the streets to see Him. That was yesterday afternoon. The whole roadway was crowded. Among the throng was the most unpopular man in Jericho. Almost everybody disliked Zaccheus ; partly, no doubt, because he was a tax-collector, but also, it is likely, because he was Zaccheus. This unpopular person, being short of stature, had climbed into a tree ; and our Lord, as He passed, had looked up and recognized him, and had said, "Come down, Zaccheus, I will dine to-day at your house." You can see how such a thing as that would set all men to talking.

There were two parties, calling our Lord by different titles. Those who did not believe in Him called Him "Jesus of Nazareth." Those who did, called Him "Jesus, the Son of David." The blind beggar, sitting by the wayside, was turning all this over in his mind.

And now, on this spring morning, Bartimæus sat in the main street near the city gate, holding out his hand. And in the distance he heard a crowd coming ; there were sounds of tongues and feet. On they came, filling the street from side to side. And the blind man did what any blind man would have done under like circumstances : he reached out his hand and grasped the coat of the nearest

man, and said, "What does it mean? What is it all about?" And the man answered, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." There He came along the road. Immediately, Bartimæus began to call as loud as he could, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me! Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

This was the voice of recognition. The blind man recognized the opportunity. There must have been twenty blind men in Jericho that day, and every one of them must have known that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. Nobody in the town could help knowing that. But not another one was healed. Yes; some of the gospels say that there was one other, but no more than that. All the other blind men were blind when Jesus came, and just as blind when He went away. That was because they missed the opportunity.

The difference between people, whereby some succeed and others fail, is due, of course, in a measure, to a difference of opportunity; but still more to a difference in the recognition of opportunity. Here are two men in the same business; one gets rich, while the other stays poor. The rich man may have had no more opportunity than the poor man; but every opportunity that came, he recognized.

Here are two men in the same class in college. They have the same teachers, and may, if they will, have the same companions. These opportunities are equal. One man makes much of himself, and becomes an eminent citizen; the other lapses into ignominious obscurity. Here are two persons at the same service. One goes away blessed; the other goes away bored. The service is the same, but the people are different; and the difference is in the matter of recognition.

Every day, Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. In the street, in the schoolroom, in the office, as we read, as we walk, as we work, He comes, ready to bless us, if we will. Sometimes, we are like the two who went to Emmaus, who when He made as if He would go on, urged Him to come in. Or we are like this blind beggar, and appeal for help and blessing.

The beggar's cry was also an utterance of faith. He not only recognized an opportunity, but he found the opportunity in the person of Jesus Christ. He was one of those who, not having seen, believed.

His faith was most inadequate theologically. It was sufficient, however, religiously. It was enough to make him side with those who were the friends of Christ, and to call out to Him for help. He believed that Jesus Christ could

help him. Presently, our Lord said, "Thy faith hath saved thee." We are accordingly assured that the blind man's faith was saving faith. The only kind of faith which deserves that adjective is religious faith.

There is a great difference between theological and religious orthodoxy. Theological orthodoxy is an external matter, and may not even suffice to make men respectable. It is a thing of the brain and of the lips, and may have no sort of relation to the heart or to the hands. Some of the most objectionable of men have been scrupulous in this recitation of accurate doctrinal formulas: and then they have gone out and broken the Ten Commandments.

The difference between theological and religious orthodoxy is like the difference between botany and roses. Botany is about roses, giving them scientific names and enabling us to take them to pieces understandingly. But roses are the roses themselves. Or it is like the difference between grammar and conversation. Grammar is the science of speech. As we talk, the grammarian notices that we use nouns and adverbs, conjugations and declensions. Or it is like the difference between "rhetoric," as it used to be called, and literature. The old rhetoric books took

Shakespeare and Milton and called attention to their use of zeugma, and paraleipsis, and anacoluthon. Mr. Gardiner, in his "Forms of Prose Literature," quotes from a writer who tried to assist his readers to an appreciation of the Odes of Horace by showing how they illustrated "the synectic, in its threefold divisions of anastomosis, symptosis and phonetic syzygy." Out of a thousand admirers of poetry, even of Latin poetry, not more than two would probably be able even to define these words. And yet the noble verse would be a delight and an inspiration to them all.

So it is with faith. Formulas have but a remote connection with it. What is the faith which saves men? It is that which makes the little child hold tight to his father's hand. You cannot define it. The theologians can no more define it than the chemists can analyze life. But you see what it is. It is that which makes a man appeal to Jesus Christ. When in the moment of temptation he turns to Him for strength, when in the hour of sorrow he turns to Him for comfort, when in the season of perplexity he turns to Him for truth, and takes His word, then his faith appears. It may be as full of error as the blind man's; but it saves him, nevertheless.

Presently it appeared that the beggar's

voice of recognition and of faith was also the voice of perseverance. Nobody could stop him. "Jesus, Thou Son of David," he cried, "have mercy on me." And this, not once nor twice, but many times. The street was full of noise, but his cry was heard above it all. Those who stood about him told him in the plainest Hebrew to hold his tongue; it made no difference. Or rather, it increased his eagerness; so much the more a great deal he continued to lift up his voice. All the distraction, all the hindrance and obstruction, all the indifferent and impatient or hostile folk who crowded in between him and the Master, did but emphasize his purpose.

Then Jesus heard the cry. He stopped, and had the man brought to Him. And the man cast away his long cloak, and came. It was very warm in Jericho in the middle of the day, but in the spring there was a chill in the morning air. A week after, in Jerusalem, there was a fire burning in the courtyard of the high priest's house, where Peter stood and warmed himself. So the beggar had a long cloak wrapped about him. Begging, even in warm weather, is a cold business.

The blind man cast away his cloak and came. "What do you want?" said the Master. "I want to see," said the man.

Blessed is he who knows thus plainly what he wants. Bartimæus knew his defect distinctly. One reason why we make such halting and uncertain progress towards spiritual health is because we do not know what is the matter with us. We have a vague idea that we are not as good as we ought to be: we have various faults. But what we need to do is to take our imperfections one by one and definitely and patiently amend them. Let the others go: take one, and bring it to the Master, as the blind man brought his blind eyes. Thus shall we be helped.

And Jesus touched him. He made the beggar see. That was a miracle. The name is appropriate: it means a wonderful thing, and this was a wonderful thing. So far, however, was it from being against nature, that it was the most natural of all events. One of the contributions of Christian Science to the Christian religion is in the fact that it is impressing upon us the naturalness of the miraculous. Miracles are every-day occurrences. People are being healed, as this blind man was, without medicine, by the touch of a hand or by the tones of a voice, until we are coming to understand that it is all as harmonious with natural law as the action of medicine. The old notion that in a miracle God broke in

upon the course of nature is no longer held by instructed and intelligent persons. God is in all nature. By His ordering there is a relation not only between drugs and the body, but between the mind and the body. Jesus understood that relation, and acted upon it. Or rather, His personality coming in contact as here with physical weakness brought about an inevitable and natural result. He could not help opening the eyes of the blind. The blind man who recognized Him as He passed by, opened his own eyes.

The miracles are recorded in the Bible not so much on account of their marvel, as on account of their meaning. Of the many acts of healing which Jesus did, these are selected for their significance. What, then, does this miracle mean?

The man came blind, and went away blind no longer: the fact is significant spiritually. The man came a beggar, and went away a beggar no longer: the fact is significant socially.

Take first the spiritual lesson. The man's eyes were opened. It is a symbol of our Lord's whole ministry: that is what He came to do. And that is what we need. To see the difference between right and wrong, to see the way of duty, to see the subtle distinc-

tions between truth and falsehood, to see our neighbor and ourself, and God—who is there that can do this clearly? Even St. Paul had to say that we see now “through a glass, darkly.” Jesus Christ will give us sight. Many a man has come to Him blind, and has gone away with such a gift of sight as has revealed to him a new heaven and a new earth. Thenceforth the world has been a different world. It has happened again and again. It is one of the supreme miracles, ever so much more wonderful and effective than the cure of Bartimæus. And we can verify it. There is no uncertainty about it. We know men and women in our own circle of acquaintance who have been transformed by knowing Jesus Christ. To-day, for every one of us, He passeth by. He will open our eyes, if we wish it, as the blind man did.

Take now the social lesson. This blind beggar is the symbol of a present problem, the problem of poverty. What shall we do for the poor? There were excellent people in Jericho who asked themselves that question, and answered it by a distribution of alms. As they passed along the street and saw Bartimæus, with his outstretched hat or hand, they put something into it. And the next day, they found the same beggar in the same

position. So it went on. The poor were helped in their poverty, but they were not helped out of their poverty. Then the Master came, and when He helped the man, He left him a different man. He was a beggar no longer. For Jesus addressed Himself, not to the man's poverty, but to the cause of his poverty. Bartimæus was a beggar because he was blind. Jesus opened his eyes.

It is the new philanthropy. The new philanthropists are trying not only to alleviate poverty, but to remove it. They are endeavoring to understand it, to get at the causes of it, and to change the conditions.

Then the blind man saw ; and the first thing that he saw was the way before his feet. On it led after Jesus Christ. The man went along that way. He followed Him. He took the gift which the Lord had given him, and used it in the Lord's service.

THE MISSION OF PHILIP.

Philip findeth Nathaniel.—*John 1: 45.*

THUS the church begins. One man makes the supreme discovery and comes into acquaintance with Jesus of Nazareth, and straight he goes and tells his new truth to another. Read the first chapters of the history of the Christian Church as they are written at the beginning of the New Testament, and see how many times this incident is repeated. It is characteristic of Christianity. It is the instinctive motion of the Christian. One finds another, and thus the kingdom of God comes.

Ours is an aggressive religion. It is never contented. It stands by itself among the religions of the race in its zeal for making converts. It will never stop till it has discovered every Nathaniel, and has brought him into the presence of Jesus. It will never be satisfied until the whole race is Christian: nor will it be contented then, until every Christian is a good Christian. That will be a long time yet.

This aggressive spirit is seen in every Chris-

tian who has learned the mind of the Master, and has caught the deep meaning of His religion, and is in spiritual sympathy with Him. The Christian does not imagine that his task is done when he has worked out his own salvation. He does not deceive himself by thinking that the chief purpose of his life is to work out his own salvation. He knows that salvation cannot be selfishly attained, that no man can be saved alone, and that we save ourselves by saving our brethren. He finds his best occupation in helping, uplifting, trying to save somebody else. It is what Jesus said: He who will save his life shall lose it; he only who is content to lose his life for Christ's sake and for the good of his neighbors, shall find it. We are good Christians in proportion as we follow the example of that apostle who, having himself found Jesus, lost no time till he should bring his brother also.

This aggressive spirit, this longing to go out and bring some brother in, marks not only the Christian but the earnest man of every creed, the world over. It fired the heart of a camel-driver in an Arabian desert, and made him the ambassador of God to a sixth part of the inhabitants of the planet. "Though the sun stand on my right hand and the moon on my

left," said Mohammed, "and both command me to hold my peace, yet must I speak."

It moved a German schoolmaster, so that he became a lever for overturning most of the established institutions of his day that they might be builded over again better. You know how stout he stood, that honest Luther; nothing could shake him. "God help me," he declared. "I can do no other, speak I must." All the priests and prelates, all the curses, civil and ecclesiastical, all the flames and fagots notwithstanding, yet must he utter forth in the hearing of all men the truth which God had given him. Though he were confronted by as many devils as there were tiles on all the roofs of all the cities of all Europe, yet must he defy the whole Satanic multitude and tell his errand.

The aggressive spirit makes earnest men akin. The earnest man cannot be contented to be right all alone. He will have no monopoly of truth. He will not have his brain a prison but a treasure-house of knowledge. What he sees he would have the whole world see; what he believes he would have the whole world believe. His desire is that of the apostle who stood before the king: "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day were both almost and

altogether such as I am,—except these bonds,” St. Paul added ; and he adds the same, meaning his many limitations and shortcomings. The truth which he possesses, he would share with all ; his errors and faults he is sincerely sorry for, and so much the more as they hinder him from being helpful.

It is interesting and instructive to observe how this aggressive spirit, which is a quality of greatness, marks in Holy Scripture even the humblest Christians. “The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me ;” and so Philip became a Christian. And what next ? “Philip findeth Nathaniel.” He cannot rest till he has found his friend and brought him.

It is the same in Samaria. “The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He.” That was the plainest word which He had spoken of Himself. To no one anywhere had He told that great truth so fully and distinctly, using no parable : I am the Christ. What does the woman do with this word from heaven ? “The woman left her water-pot and went her way into the city, and saith unto the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ ?”

Always this word "Come." Come, cries Andrew to his brother Simon; Come, cries Philip to Nathaniel; Come, entreats this woman of Samaria, stopping every one whom she meets in the street. These people must speak; they must get somebody else; they must tell what great things Christ has done for their souls.

Jesus heals a demoniac in Gergesa: "And he went his way and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done for him." Matthew leaves his custom-house and follows Jesus. He gives up a good business to enter into this new service. But this is not enough; he must bring his companions, also. He makes a great supper, and gets all his publican partners and friends together to meet Him whom henceforth he purposes to follow. The authorities seize John and Peter, crying, you must speak no more in this name. If you do, we will put you into prison, and worse afterwards. But the apostles answer, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." They simply could not help it. The great truth of the Christian creed had flashed in upon the souls of these men, and to keep silence about it was impos-

sible. Better be put in prison a hundred times; better die, first: rather than be still. St. Stephen died. They might stone him if he would, but while breath was in him, speak he must.

This aggressive spirit, this impulse of the Christian Philip to find Nathaniel, this duty, desire, necessity of open testimony and personal appeal, ought to characterize every Christian. Every Christian ought to be making somebody else Christian.

It is easy enough to speak to people on the subject of religion, in the pulpit. They expect it there. But to address our neighbors upon this matter in private conversation is one of the most difficult of occupations.

One reason is that we dislike to make ourselves disagreeable. We are afraid that the subject may not be a pleasant one. And it is very true that Philip may make himself exceedingly disagreeable. He may speak in an unnatural tone of voice, and in a constrained and singular manner, and in phrases which seem affected. He may simply annoy Nathaniel, and do more harm than good to the cause which he represents. Few people are more uncomfortably disagreeable than the men and women who are piously disagreeable. They make even the saints lose their temper.

There is no need, however, that the subject of personal religion should repel the listener. There is surely nothing in the theme itself which is distasteful. It is concerned with the highest, the most important, the most helpful truth in the world. If we choose fitting occasions and fitting people; if we speak in a natural tone of voice, and behave like normal human beings, and if we do not preach anything which we are not ourselves honestly following, we will not make ourselves disagreeable.

In every friendship that is worth anything, whether between parent and child, or between friend and friend, the moment does come,—and not once or twice only,—when it is just the time for a spiritual word. Be on the watch for that moment, and then speak. Have the aggressive spirit in your heart, be possessed with the sense of responsibility for your Christian influence, seek every good opportunity to make somebody else as good a Christian as you are yourself, and you will find Nathaniel. Who can measure the value of open, earnest, manly Christian speech? Sometimes a word has changed the whole current of a life. Your words, just because you speak them, will be more effective than a great many sermons. What you say may not be

eloquent, nor logical nor in all respects accurate; you may blunder in saying it; but what your friend will hear will be the voice of your heart.

I suppose that the real difficulty is our consciousness of our own imperfections. Who are we that we should go to another, saying by the fact of our addressing him that we are better than he is, and urging him to the spiritual life? And if we go, how shall we begin to speak? And if our friend asks questions or makes comments, how shall we answer him?

Let us consider what it is that we desire to do. We may put it into a single sentence: We desire to bring our friend to the knowledge, and thus to the love, and so to the allegiance of Jesus Christ. What will bring that about? Our own example will do a great deal. The fact that we are manifestly devoted to Jesus Christ, that we are not only regular in our attendance upon those services in which we are brought near to Him, but are glad to go and honestly regret to stay away, that the will of Jesus Christ affects our will,—all this is of aggressive value. Though we do not say a word, it helps. Christianity on Sunday, with a lack of Christianity between Sundays, does not help. Devotion to the church, ac-

accompanied by selfishness at home, does not help. If we so live as to make it plain to those who know us that Jesus Christ is an ever-present strength and joy to us; if they see that He makes us considerate of others, cheerful under trials, patient in affliction, self-sacrificing, and having the spirit of service,—that helps immeasurably.

To bring our friend where he will hear about Jesus Christ is a way to effect our desire for him. We may not be able to say the word which we want to say; but in the church, where the scriptures are read and the gospel is preached, he may hear the word which he needs. If it were an appreciation for music which we wished to cultivate in him, we probably would not argue with him about the excellence of the works of the masters, we would take him to concerts, to as many concerts as we could get him to attend cheerfully. We would not urge him against his will, but we would very persistently invite him. We would not expect much at the beginning: he would probably say a great many times that he would never go again, and would revile music on general principles, but he would go if we kept after him, and by and by he would hear with his ears, and rejoice with his heart, and be converted musically. That is the right thing

to do with the friend whom we would bring to an appreciation of religion. We will bring him at least to the service. He ought never to be compelled to come in, but the Christian in the house ought never to go to church on Sunday without inviting the member of the family who does not commonly go. That unwearying, cheerful invitation will accomplish much.

That is what Philip did. He did not know much about Jesus Christ himself, he had been acquainted with Him only for one day; and when Nathaniel, having listened to what he had to say about Him, offered an objection—can any good thing come out of Nazareth?—he had no argument or proof to give in answer. What he said was, Come and see. Only come, he said, look into His face, hear Him speak, get acquainted with Him, and then make up your own mind. That was no argument; but it was more effective than a whole encyclopædia of arguments. Nathaniel did come and see, and thus another disciple was added to the company of Jesus.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

THERE is one article of the Apostles' Creed whose intention is unknown. Nobody can tell how it got into the creed ; and, being there, nobody can say what it originally meant. We recite it over and over, without denial, even without question, but, I will venture to say, without understanding.

Of course, the creed from beginning to end is concerned with high matters of whose full significance we are all ignorant. A formula whose first word is an assertion of belief in God, and which goes on through the mysteries of redemption to the life everlasting, presents not only a series of the articles of our belief, but an outline of a course of study which will be sufficient to occupy us to all eternity. But in the case of the article which I now purpose to consider the very subject of our study is uncertain. Not only the meaning but the intention of the sentence is unknown. I refer to the words in which we express our belief in the communion of saints. What is the communion of saints ?

The Apostles' Creed, substantially in its

present form, was in existence at least as early as the latter part of the second century. It appears at that date in the writings of Tertullian, who lived in the north of Africa, and of Irenæus, who lived in the south of France. It is the creed of the church of the West, as the Nicene formula is the creed of the church of the East. Neither Tertullian nor Irenæus, however, include in their statement of belief any such article as the communion of saints. The first appearance of these words is more than two hundred years later, in the beginning of the fifth century. That is, for two hundred years the service of the church contained no creed at all. The emphasis in that period was not on belief but on behavior. And after that, for two hundred years more, the creed made no reference to the saints. Indeed, the assertion of the communion of saints is not made to-day in any part of Eastern Christendom. The Greek Church says the Nicene Creed, in which this phrase does not occur.

In the fifth century, then, and in Gaul,—or as we now say, France,—the words were added. The creed had not yet been stereotyped. The churches were not particular to recite it always in precisely the same form. If they got the general sense of it, that was enough. So that addition and subtraction

were both easy, and both were taking place. One day it occurred to somebody to follow the phrase, "the holy catholic church," with the further phrase, "the communion of saints." And the congregation liked it, and wanted it said again that way next Sunday, and then the neighbors heard about it, and then Nicetas of Aquileia put it in a book. Thus, with general approval, but without any formal action, it found a place in the creed.

Now in the early part of the fifth century the words *sanctorum communionem* had two meanings, according as *sanctorum* was taken to be a neuter or a masculine noun. The words might signify a participation either in holy things or in holy people. The holy things were the sacraments; the holy people were the saints, especially the saints above in the joy of heaven. In either case, the reference was to the church, for the new phrase was not considered as a new article of faith. You will notice in the creed, as it is printed in the Prayer-book, that the articles are separated one from another by a colon, but that the mark between "the holy catholic church" and "the communion of saints" is a semicolon. These two make a single article. The communion of saints is set in the creed not by way of addition but by way of explanation. So

that as the Apostles' Creed now stands three assertions are made about the church: it is holy, it is catholic, and it is the communion of saints. It is impossible, however, to decide what was in the minds of the good men who first used the new words. They may have been thinking of sacraments, or they may have been thinking of saints, or they may have been thinking of both together. What is the peculiar privilege of members of the holy catholic church, according to the Apostles' Creed? Is it that they are permitted to receive the sacraments of grace? is it that hereafter they will be admitted with all the blessed saints into glory everlasting? or is it one joy in the present and the other joy in the future? Nobody can tell.

Why should we care? These are both narrow meanings. Neither of them satisfies us. They are not only narrow, but they represent the faults rather than the virtues of the holy catholic church.

It is true that in the church we are privileged to participate in the sacraments. We are admitted to the table of the Lord, that He may dwell in us and we in Him. And that is indeed a blessing. But the blessing is not in the act itself: it is in the presence of Him who therein blesses us, and in the new spirit with

which we come out to take up the old life. The church has asserted an exclusive possession of the sources of spiritual life. It has maintained that without the sacraments there is no salvation; and it has claimed to be the sole dispenser of the sacraments. For hundreds of years it successfully preserved a monopoly of the necessities of the Christian life. It grew rich by selling the sacraments. And it treated its competitors in a manner which no monopoly to-day would dare to imitate afar off. It controlled legislation, and carried on an unceasing and unswerving persecution. It killed its rivals. The more formidable among them it burned at the stake. And this it did as the communion of saints; that is, as the society whose members were admitted to a participation of holy things.

It is true also that the church is not divided by the barrier of death. Part of it is here on earth; part of it is in paradise; but it is all one church. On we go out of the material sanctuary into the spiritual, expecting to continue there the prayers, the praises, and the religious joys which we have begun here. We anticipate with confidence a day when we shall enter into fellowship with the saints. The time will come when we shall know the men

and women whose books we have read for our souls' good, whose lives have entered into our life, and whose very names make our hearts warm. What a blessed thing it will be to have our residence in a place where there will be no clocks or almanacs, where nobody will ever be in a hurry, where there will be ever so many more than seven days in a week. There we may converse with St. Augustine without a fear lest we may be keeping him from his studies; and with St. Francis, without taking his time from his prayers. There we will be free from all appointments, emancipated from the bondage of time. And we anticipate a dearer companionship—the blessed, familiar fraternity of our personal friends, whom we shall meet again after long parting, in the light across which falls no shadow of death. All this is precious to our souls. But the place for it in the creed is in “the life everlasting.” The trouble with this interpretation of the communion of saints as a definition of the church is that it puts the emphasis too much upon the other world. It encourages that misplaced patience which endures the ills of this present life in the hope of a better life to come. These ills are not to be endured: they are to be amended. The Christian virtue which is needed in their presence is not

patience; it is righteous indignation, and a militant spirit, and an earnest purpose. Here, for example, is a great church in the midst of a sordid town, and priests and people are daily saying their prayers in it, and singing hymns about the world to come, and all the time the town lies still in wickedness. That means a wrong idea of the relation between prayer and progress. It means a false conception of the mission of the Christian Church.

These two meanings of the communion of saints were current in the thought of the fifth century when the words were added to the creed. Sometimes the phrase meant a participation in holy things, that is, the sacraments; sometimes it meant a fellowship with holy persons, that is, with the saints in the world to come.

But we are not shut up to these ancient meanings. When we have determined precisely what was in the mind of the maker of a sentence of the creed, we are not obliged to read the sentence just as he read it, if we can read it better. Because he meant a narrow thing by it in the fifth century, we need not necessarily mean the same narrow thing in the twentieth century. Else the creed becomes a barrier and blocks the way. The process of interpretation is attended with peril: that is

true. It is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly. But it must be undertaken ; otherwise one of two results will follow : the formula must be abandoned, or we must compel ourselves to think a lie. The right thing to do, if we can, is to keep the formula, which is both venerable and precious and consecrated by the daily use of long generations of holy people ; but to keep it close to all the truth which the Holy Spirit has taught the church in all the ages since.

Thus we must deal with the communion of saints. It is a noble phrase, and is capable of noble meanings. And these meanings are at the heart of the definitions of the fathers ; so that they spoke more truly than they knew.

The church is indeed a fellowship with holy people, as they said, but the holy people are here in the flesh on earth. The communion of saints is the Christian brotherhood, the association of those who are trying to be good ; the *Gemeinde der Heiligen*, as Luther said. The grammarians warn us that the words *sanctorum communionem* cannot be so translated. But that does not deter us for a moment. They must be so translated. That is what they actually mean to-day.

The church is a holy church : that is, in purpose, in ideal. The people who belong to it

are called saints. No matter who they are, they are entitled saints. That is the synonym of a Christian in St. Paul's epistles. The saints may not have gone very far along the narrow way to sanctity. But they are called saints, because they have their faces turned in that direction. St. Paul addresses a letter "to the saints which are in Ephesus," and in the course of it he tells them that they must stop their lying and their stealing. These people were only beginning to be saints, and had not got far enough along to have mastered even the most elementary of the Ten Commandments. They were not altogether respectable, but they were saints: saints for the sake of their good intentions, saints because of their honest purpose, called saints already in anticipation of the time when they should be saints indeed.

And these imperfect persons, who were thus striving after a better life, were not striving all alone. They were members of a society; they belonged to a brotherhood. They were helping one another, coming together to the sacrament of spiritual strength, and going out together to undertake the tasks which were too heavy for one pair of hands. What is the meaning of the rubric which forbids the celebration of the holy communion unless there

are at least two people to communicate with the minister? It is intended to preserve the social aspects of the sacrament, as the service not of an individual only but of a group of people, of the Christian brotherhood.

Thus it was that the Christian Church came into being, as the fellowship of the faithful, as the society of friends, as the communion of saints. The creed says that the church is holy; that is, that the supreme purpose of it is the upbuilding of character. And then it adds that it is the communion of saints; that is, that one of the distinctive marks of Christian character is brotherliness. The church is the Christian brotherhood. It is the blessed company of these who in the name of Christ are trying to establish the kingdom of heaven in the world by being brotherly.

The church means also, as they said of old, a participation in holy things. It is the confraternity of the sacraments. It is the open gate of heaven. The ancient definition needs only to be filled with brotherly love. It needs the spirit of that great-minded leader of the people to whom they complained that certain men in the camp, outside the chosen company, were speaking in the name of God, and who answered, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." Would God that all the

Lord's people, whether in the ancient organization of the church or out of it, stood in heaven's gate. If in the barest meeting-house, in the midst of the strangest eccentricities of faith and worship, hopelessly removed, as it seems to us, from all which we call "the church,"—if under these unpromising conditions, God is present, heaven's gate is open, and souls are blessed, then God be praised.

Here is a church out of which men and women are seen coming with a new light in their faces. They have been in the presence of the Eternal; they have joined their voices with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven; they have stood with the enrapt apostles upon the summit of the transfiguration hill. And like the apostles, refreshed and strengthened, they come to undertake again the common task. That is a true church. There the people who are trying to be saints are fed with food from heaven.

It is a great thing for a church to minister to all the needs of the neighborhood, and thus to maintain an endless round of guilds and clubs and schools. But the essential work of a church is to open heaven's gate, to be the place where tired people shall find rest, and the discouraged shall find confidence, and the disconsolate shall find comfort, where the per-

plexed shall be directed, and the strong shall consecrate their strength. There, as of old, shall the angels of God be seen ascending and descending, going up the celestial stairway with their arms full of prayers, and coming down with their arms full of blessings.

That is what we need. Busy as we are with the exterior details of things, occupied of necessity with matters material and temporary, ministering to the minds and bodies of our neighbors, we need to realize how all this is but the lower part of an infinite activity whose higher part is in the heavens. The Father works, as our Lord said, and we work, and are fellow-laborers with God. We must see life as a whole in order to get that ennobling and invigorating understanding of it. We must come away sometimes from the tumult and turmoil of it all, and get into the serene company of the saints. Thus shall we appreciate the relation of the present moment to the eternal future, and of earth to heaven. In the early church, they used to tell people to bless their eyes with the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper; that is, to touch their fingers to their lips after they had partaken of the holy things, and make the sign of the cross before their eyes. It was the symbol of that new sight, with which they who have seen heaven open look

about thereafter in the earth. It was an expression of the blessing of the communion of saints.

This, then, is what those words mean in the creed. To the men of the fifth century, who wrote them there, they meant either a participation in holy things, or a fellowship with holy persons: they meant either sacraments or saints. But the sacraments were thought of as an exclusive possession, and the saints were all in heaven. To us of the twentieth century, the words mean more than that. They define the Christian Church as the place of brotherhood and of benediction. Here we meet the living saints; here day by day we kneel at heaven's gate.

THE RELIGION OF A CHRISTIAN.

Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.—
Eph. 4 : 13.

THIS is the formula of the religion of a Christian. All our best belief and all our best behavior is included in it. Everything is here which is needed both for the instruction and for the inspiration of a good life. The heart of the Christian religion is the Lord Jesus Christ; and more and more to grow unto the measure of the stature of His goodness is the height of the aspiration of the saints. That is what we all want: that we may be like Him.

I have especially in mind the act of confirmation. A company of young people, most of them your sons and daughters, will present themselves before the bishop in your presence and in the sight of God, and will thus openly declare their purpose to live according to the religion of a Christian. They have outgrown the years of their childhood. They have come to the time of serious thought, when God and the world and they themselves are subjects of reflection. They are perceiving with a new clearness the everlasting difference between

right and wrong. They are meeting new temptations in a new way. They are making new resolutions. Having lived thus far in a natural state of dependence and subordination, where the sum of all duty was to do what they were told to do, they are entering now into a more individual life, where they will be expected to look after themselves, to make their own rules, and to live their own lives.

Our hearts go out to these young men and women, in deep sympathy and hope and longing. We trust that they are coming to confirmation, not in any dull, conventional way,—because they are of the usual age, or because of our desire, or because of the example of their companions,—but with a high resolve, saying daily to God in their prayers, “O God, I give myself to Thee; to Thee,—body, mind and soul,—I consecrate myself; O God, forgive my sins, help me to be better; help me to be a Christian.”

Confirmation is only a beginning. It has, indeed, a certain value of its own. It is a prayer and a blessing. They who are confirmed will kneel in the chancel, while the bishop, putting his hands upon their heads prays that God will help them to be good men and women; and that is much. But to be good men and women is the chief thing. That

is what it is all for. As the words are spoken,—the words of those who come to be confirmed, promising that they will do the thing that is right as well as they can all their lives long, and the words of the bishop beseeching grace from God that they may keep the promise,—our thoughts are busy with the future. We are wondering what it will come to in actual fulfilment, how the great promise will be kept, what it will mean in a year, in five years, to those who are now, with full hearts, making it. Will they be devout and faithful and earnest members of the church? Will they be found in their places Sunday after Sunday, coming because they are glad to come? Will they be regular and reverent partakers of the Supper of the Lord? and as the fruit of it all will they be good, between Sundays, in our sight who watch them with affection and anxiety, and in God's sight, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid? Will they grow up good? That is what we will be asking of God and of our own hearts during the confirmation service. Will they approach more and more unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?

For to be good is the beginning and the middle and the end of the religion of a Chris-

tian. The organization of religion into a church is of importance; the formulation of religion into a creed is of importance; and it is well to be interested, if one's mind inclines that way, in the questions of philosophy and of administration which arise from the endeavor after the best possible organization of Christian people and the best possible formulation of Christian doctrine. But there is only one thing which is absolutely needful, and that is character. The supreme thing is character. There is so little in the gospels about either the creed or the church that it takes a commentator with a strong microscope to discover it: but the whole New Testament is a book of good living; its message is one of righteousness; the chief concern is character. So the young man comes to the Master running, and kneels down before Him. "What good thing shall I do," he cries, "that I may have eternal life?" He is the type and prophecy of earnest youth coming to confirmation. His heart is filled with fine enthusiasm; he desires to make the most of himself; he looks ahead along the way of his life asking to be guided aright. And you remember what the Master says in answer: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Keep the commandments! The old, ten, plain, familiar

statements of the moral law. Do right; be good; so shalt thou be saved.

We all know from our own experience that youth goes on into maturity upon a road beset with ambuscades. On all sides is temptation. So difficult is the journey that few of us would be willing to go back and try it over again. We confess, indeed, that we have not made a great success of living: God knows that we are none of us so good as our neighbors think we are. Nevertheless, we are profoundly grateful that we have got through even so indifferently well as we have, and we would not venture it again lest we should fare worse. So that we look at these beginners, starting out over the hard way of life, and there are tears in our eyes, of affection and of apprehension. We say to them, as the lesson which our years have taught us, that it is impossible to be good without trying, and trying continually, and trying hard. Now that they come by confirmation into full membership with us in this Christian society, we counsel them to consider the situation with great seriousness. Let them not enter lightly or unadvisedly into this high estate.

The first resolution in the rule of life of a Christian is to be honest. I mean an honesty which is not determined by the law, and which

has no relation to the probability of being found out, but which is maintained for its own sake in the sight of God. Such a sense of honesty will forbid a Christian to take anything which is not his own. The catechism mentions "picking" as well as stealing, thereby applying the commandment to the smallest matters. Indeed, it is a familiar fact of human nature that dishonesty begins small. The man who steals, so that the police get after him, had at first only a notion that to take somebody else's property did not matter, so long as the thing taken was worth little. Thus his sense of honesty became confused and weakened, and by and by when a strong temptation came, he fell into gross sin. I have in mind here the dangers of respectable life, and the cases of good men who have gone wrong. The only safety is to be unfailingly scrupulous, to be immaculately honest in the very least things.

This applies also to the taking of advantage of other people, by reason of their ignorance, or indifference or incompetence. It means every variety of cheating. It enforces a perfect fairness which will govern the playing of a game as well as the making of a bargain. It determines the transaction of all business. I do not need to tell you that in the commer-

cial world the fact that a man is a member of the church is not taken as an assurance that he is honest. It ought to mean honesty, but the truth is that deceit and fraud have ever been besetting sins of religious people. The Pharisees devoured widows' houses, and for a pretense made long prayers. We ought to face that possibility. We ought to recognize that temptation. The good Christian will resolve to be even foolishly fair in all his dealings with his neighbors.

The second resolution in the Christian rule of life is to be clean-minded. The good Christian is as particular about his mind as he is about his face and hands. You know what I mean : I do not need to go into details.

St. Paul speaks of offenses of the lips, referring especially to such as contradict the Christian principle of purity. He says that there is a kind of "foolish talking and jesting," which is not "convenient"; that is, not becoming, not consistent with the character of a Christian. Our Lord speaks of offenses of the eyes. If thine eye offend thee,—that is, if the eye be an open gate of attack on true living, if temptation comes that way,—pluck it out. The meaning is that we are to deal very severely with ourselves. The Puritans did that. They shut their eyes to works of art

which they found to be perilous to their souls. They set themselves stoutly against novels and plays which in their judgment were in opposition to the life of the spirit. We say that they went too far; and no doubt they did, sometimes. But if they made mistakes, they made them on the safe side. They were dreadfully afraid of doing wrong. And therein, let us be as like them as we can. Is the picture, or the book, or the play good for the soul? Are we better by reason of it, or worse? Does it help or does it hinder the progress of our life towards the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ? Would He like it? He who sees the heart, would He approve? These are questions which we may properly hesitate to answer for anybody else; but we have got to answer them for our own selves. If the thing is against your best nature, stop it. No matter though all the arguments of grace and beauty, of art and letters, and of polite society, be for it, turn you away, for the safety of your soul. Emerson said of a famous book that he was not good enough to read it; as one might say of a lovely landscape in a malarious country, "I am not strong enough to stand there and enjoy it."

The initial thing is the clean mind. All

hideous sins which ruin human life have their beginnings in a thought of evil which seemed foolish rather than wrong. That thought grew into another that was worse, and that into a word, and the word into an act, and the act into the perdition of the man. The thing to do is to guard the mind as we guard the lips, and to be as resolute against thinking evil as we are against speaking it aloud. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

The third resolution in the Christian rule of living is to heed the voice of conscience. Conscience is the voice whereby God speaks in our hearts. You know that you ought to do this or that: you have a feeling which impels you to it: then God speaks to direct you. You know that you ought not to do this or that; as you turn your face or your mind in that direction you have an uneasy sense of transgression: then God is telling you that it is wrong. The good Christian is very sensitive to this inner voice, and very obedient to it. He has a quick perception of the differ-

ence between good and evil. There are many things which he will not do, some of which seem innocent enough, because he knows that he ought not. "I ought not," he says; repeating aloud what God has said to him in the silence of his soul. "I ought not to do that because it is wrong." We want men and women, and boys and girls, in the Christian church who have very clear and strong convictions concerning sin.

Many of those who come to be confirmed have thus far depended largely upon the convictions of their elders. They have kept from evil not so much because it is wrong as because it is forbidden. The time comes now when they must face life for themselves. They must make their own decisions. They must say "No" at the bidding of their own conscience.

This is immeasurably important, but it is all negative. We expect more than that. The conscientious person has what is called a sense of duty. He is governed in what he says and does not by convenience, not by pleasure only, not by the current opinion of his class, but by his perception of the will of God. He asks, as Paul asked on the Damascus road, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He has a great desire to please God. So the

alternatives come, and he decides them one way or the other, by their relation to the mind of God. Every day he says, "I don't want to do this; but I will, because God wishes me to do it." That is what we mean by strength of character. The strong man is ruled by his ideals, by his convictions; by his high purpose, with all his might, under all conditions, to obey God.

The fourth resolution which enters into the religion of a Christian is a determination to increase the happiness of life. I mean that the good Christian will not be content with the development of his own character: he will be occupied not only with the endeavor to be good, but with the endeavor to do good. He will minister to others. This is plainly what Jesus Christ did, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. He gave even His life for the general good. Nobody is approaching unto the measure of His stature who is not in some way doing that sort of thing.

That means, at the least, the exercise of constant politeness and courtesy and sincere consideration for other people's feelings. It restrains the Christian from adding to that heavy burden of unhappiness which is all of human making. It forbids the saying of any

word or the doing of any act which will make life harder for anybody else. It forbids frowns and pride and ridicule, and every look that hurts. It controls the temper.

That is the least of it. It means also a constant watchfulness for opportunities of service. It impels to such behavior as will manifest affection, regard for weakness and age, chivalry, and every form of common usefulness. It sends young people into society not only to get what happiness they can for themselves, but to contribute to the general joy. What can I do to help my neighbor? What use can I make of myself and of my privileges and possessions whereby the pleasure of the occasion shall be shared by those who are least likely to enjoy it? These are Christian questions, and enter vitally into the religion of a Christian. I am not sure that our Lord's suggestions about dinner-parties can be followed literally in the complex society in which we live: the guests and the host might be alike uncomfortable. But the social principle which He there laid down is universal and eternal. Do not be content to entertain those only who will in return entertain you. Be kind and courteous and thoughtful without expectation of return, that you may thus increase the common stock of joy. Every day

be as happy as you possibly can, and try to make others happy.

All this has its immediate application in the home, where religion is most stoutly tested, and where the grace of helpfulness has continual opportunity. What kind of a home is it, so far as you are concerned? With what voice, with what face, with what degree of selfishness or of unselfishness, do you meet its daily duties? You see that confirmation and church membership are very practical matters. They have to do with the homeliest concerns of the household. They summon those who enter into them to ask themselves various questions. What does my presence in my home mean? When I open the door do I add to the anxieties or to the pleasures of the family?

These four resolutions—to be honest, to be clean-minded, to heed the voice of conscience, and to increase the general happiness,—are related to the religion of a Christian as the foundation is related to the house. They lie deep in the ground. They are not the only stones in that wall: I have chosen them out of many others, not because they are sufficient of themselves to uphold the structure of a Christian life, but because they lie so close at hand, and are so homely and so necessary. It is for

us, friends, who have long been members of the church, to consider at this season how far we ourselves are giving the youth of this congregation the assistance of a good example.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN.

And when he was gone forth into the way there came one running, and kneeled to him, and said, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?—*Mark 10 : 17.*

HE belonged to the privileged classes. The incident is described by three of the evangelists, and they all agree that he was rich,—he had great possessions; one of them adds that he was a ruler,—he had high position. He was young, too, and was making plans to live a larger life. He was looking out into the world with eager anticipation and enthusiasm, making up his mind what great things he would do.

The Master of men, the moment He saw him, loved him. There he came running and kneeled at Jesus' feet, and the Master looking down into his expectant eyes, loved him. Christ was in sympathy with young men; He understood them. His intimate friends were young men. The Christian mission, the supreme adventure of faith, the purpose to win the world and to bring its mighty kingdoms to the feet of Christ, was

undertaken by young men. The Master welcomed this young man, holding out His hands.

The man had possessions and position but he was not therewith content. He was profoundly dissatisfied: dissatisfied with himself.

He was living a pleasant life, but he had become aware that there was a pleasure which all his money could not purchase. There was a peace and joy of which he had faint, distant glimpses in his dreams, and which he saw clearly shining in the face of Christ; and he desired it. But the world could not give it to him.

He was living a good life. In spite of the manifold temptations, which assail the rich as stoutly as they assail the poor, he was an upright, clean, honest and honorable man. He kept the commandments. His conscience was congenial with the moral law. But even this, which is a true source of contentment, did not content him. He felt that somehow he lacked something. He perceived that there was a difference between his life and the life eternal.

For the word "eternal," as he understood it, is not an adjective of time or place. It is an adjective of quality. The life which he desired was not simply a life everlasting, into

which he might presently enter by the gate of the grave. He did not look that far ahead. He was interested, as every healthy young man is, in the immediate present. What he wanted was a heavenly life, to-day and here. Such a life would be eternal in the sense of being in accord with that which is eternal, and thus independent of passing chances and changes of good and evil fortune. It would be eternal because it would be fitted to go on without serious interruption into the life to come.

Here, for example, is a house which is an impertinence in the landscape. It is so manifestly cheap and temporary, and in its shape and color so out of harmony with the ground whereon it stands, that it is an affront to nature. Here is another house which is akin to all the hills and fields, strong as the rocks and apparently as lasting, belonging to the woods and meadows, brother to the trees, and looking as if God had made it and not man. You remember old cathedrals, over the sea, which have that eternal aspect. The difference between such structures and the wooden lodging-houses which stand by the side of the country road in the neighborhood of the small station as one looks out of the car window, is elemental. It is like the difference be-

tween the respectable life which the rich young man was living and the eternal life which he desired to live.

His question suggests that he had already learned that life eternal is to be attained along the way of social service. "What good thing shall I do," he cries, "that I may have eternal life?" It is possible that the good thing to which he expected the Master to direct him was an offering of sacrifice, or a mortification of the flesh, or some other personal matter; but it is more likely that he awaited a social counsel which should send him on some errand of helpful ministry. Anyhow, the answer shows plainly enough that in the mind of Jesus the eternal and the social were vitally connected. In order to live a life eternal, it is essential that we live a life fraternal.

Aspiring thus to do his highest duty, the man begins aright. Straight he goes to confer with Jesus Christ.

For the heart of all right social living is the spirit of Jesus. Canon Barnett, the founder of Toynbee Hall, writing a book full of social enthusiasm applied to social betterment, and dealing in every page with the service of man, entitles it the "Service of God." The idea throughout is that we can serve man effectively only in the name of God, only in the

spirit of the Son of God. This is the conclusion of long and successful experience.

Some have tried to learn their social duty and to perform it by the study of economics, leaving religion out. The results may be read in the writings of those economists, now happily silent, who constructed their social theories on the hypothesis that man is a machine, or an animal; that he has a mouth and two hands, and no soul.

Some have tried to get a right conception of their social duty by a study of ethics, sometimes leaving religion out, and sometimes bringing in all manner of queer, fantastical, remote and obsolete religions. The result, so far as these imported creeds are concerned, is like that which would be gained by a study of the medical treatises of the Middle Ages. The mediæval books may amuse the student, but they will teach him absolutely nothing. All that is true in them has been brought forward into modern practice. So with the queer religions. They are remote or obsolete because they are in the place in which they properly belong. Everything that is true or helpful in them is in the plain gospels.

No; ethics and economics are profitable studies, but what is essentially needed in order that we may attain that social life, which is

eternal life, is more than a book, even the best book; it is a life. We need the books, but the one thing which is supremely needful is that we enter first into the realized presence of Jesus. Unless we do that, we cannot even read the books aright. We cannot understand the social facts. We cannot do our social duty. No man ever helped another man, save in the spirit of Jesus. He may not have taken that sacred name upon his lips, he may not have been aware what spirit he was of, but that was it. Wherever good intention goes astray, and they who would help their fellow men do them harm instead, the initial error is to be found in some departure from His precepts, who is the way and the life. The rich young man came to Jesus running, and kneeled to Him. We must do the same. It is the only right beginning either of social study or of social living. Look at it, until you see it with the eyes of your soul: the Master, standing strong and gracious, and the young man kneeling to Him.

Let us see, now, how Jesus deals with the rich young man.

Immediately, He stops him and asks a searching question. The man comes running, full of enthusiasm; he kneels to Him in admiration and reverence; and Jesus loves him. It might

easily be said that Jesus needs him. The young man has possessions and position. Will it not be well for the new Christian movement to enlist this wealthy and influential recruit? Will it not be well, for the general good, to defer somewhat to this unusually desirable disciple, and make it easy for him to come in? Is not this the kind of man we want, young, rich, and willing? The little group of fishermen and peasants, one would say, may wisely hold out hands of cordial welcome to young Master Dives. But you see what Jesus does. He meets the young man, altogether overlooking what he has, asking only what he is. He deals with him not as a rich man, but as a man.

This was Master Dives' first lesson in the social aspects of the Christian religion. The essential preliminary to any right social living is that Christian insight which looks through all material possessions to the man himself. If we are to do our social duty, we must meet our neighbors in the spirit of Him who cared for what people were, not for what they wore. A good many artificial distinctions, based on dress and descent and houses and lands and face and voice and occupation must be put away out of our minds till they are as clear and open as the mind of Christ.

Jesus taught the rich young man that riches are of no social account in the kingdom of heaven.

This lesson, thus indicated by the fact that our Lord, instead of receiving the man immediately, stopped him and asked a question, was followed by another lesson which is indicated in the question which He asked. The young man had begun politely, in the pleasant manner of his kind, with a conventional word of compliment. He had addressed Jesus as "good Master." Jesus says, What do you mean? Why do you call Me good?

That is, on the personal side, Christ desires allegiance, but it must be thoughtful and considered allegiance. Whoever tenders it must understand what he is about. One came to Him, upon another like occasion, saying, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." But Jesus answered, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The undertaking of discipleship was to our Lord a very serious matter, and He insisted that men should look at it attentively and face all its hard consequences before they made their resolution. He never encouraged any sudden, impetuous, emotional decision. He tested those who came to Him in that

spirit, and was not satisfied until He had made them think. There is a tombstone in the Copps Hill burying-ground at Boston, inscribed, "He was an enemy to enthusiasm." Our Lord was not an enemy to enthusiasm. When He beheld this enthusiastic young man, He loved him. But He felt the need of carrying enthusiasm on into serious determination. He was in profound sympathy with the visions of youth; with the ardor, the courage and the confidence with which men pass out of the life of the student into the life of the citizen. He looked into the eager eyes of this young man who was asking for some great good thing to do, and loved him. But because He loved him, He stopped him with a question, that he might weigh his words and think what he was about.

Also, on the social side, if the man were to undertake, as he seemed to intend, a larger service of his fellow men, it must be a reasonable service. He must enter into it not merely from an impulse of the moment, but with deliberation. In order to be a helpful social worker, he must be a thoughtful person. He must consider what he wished to say before he said it. He must have the habit of sincerity and of accuracy. Then he would be likely to consider what he wished to do before he did it.

A good deal of excellently intentioned social ministry is spoiled by precisely the defect which Jesus immediately saw in this young man. The social worker is full of enthusiasm and sympathy and energy and zeal. He enters into the social settlement or the municipal league or the association for reforming his neighbors in this way or in that, with a fervor which sometimes makes the cautious procedure of his colleagues appear cold and calculating. He comes running, and kneels down in the presence of the holy cause, asking, What good thing shall I do? But presently he finds that the work is slow and hard; it demands patience; it is not romantically interesting. And the parable of the seed growing quickly finds in him another illustration. He gets tired and discouraged. Our Lord tested that young man in order to see what spirit he was of. He tried him to find out if he had staying qualities.

First, He tried him according to the law of simple obedience. "If thou wilt enter into life," He said, "keep the commandments."

That disappointed the young man grievously. He felt like the Syrian general when the prophet sent him to take a bath in the little, narrow, shallow, muddy Jordan. He had expected to be given some spectacular, heroic

task ; he had looked for some new, engaging duty ; and here was nothing but the old commandments, every one of which he had known by heart for years. " Which ? " he asked ; still hoping that Jesus might have some hidden meaning in His words, and might intend something out of the ordinary. And when he learned that the commandments were only the old ten, he said in a tone of impatience, " All these have I kept from my youth up." For he did not know the truth which is contained in the allegory of the high ideals ; where the explorer who is searching for the high ideals learns at last that they are not a range of romantic mountains, but a series of populated plains where men are plowing and reaping, and buying and selling, and women are doing the errands of the house.

The lesson is that the social duty to which Christ would immediately and supremely direct us is not to be looked for in the distance. It is close at hand. It confronts us in the circumstances of our daily lives. It is a fine thing to engage in the betterment of a city, but there is no training for that great service comparable to the exercise which is to be had in the betterment of a college ; and the place where the betterment of a college may most effectively begin is in a man's own club and

room. It is a fine thing to work in a social settlement, but in the meantime every Christian household ought to be a social settlement, a distributing centre of beneficial influences, a contribution to the righteousness and the happiness of the neighborhood.

The essential thing is the faithful performance of the common duties, whose importance in God's sight may be inferred from the fact that He has made so many of them. They are nearest to our hand by His divine appointment, that we may the more naturally do them. To be honest in the details of the smallest transactions, to be true in the emergencies of the most familiar conversations, to have a strong, wholesome and masculine cleanliness of speech and of thought, to be courteous, considerate, cheerful and helpful under one's own roof; in a word,—as our Lord said,—to keep the commandments, the old plain commandments, is to render a social service which is not only more acceptable to God but more beneficial to men than,—missing this,—to be the president or the vice-president or the secretary or the treasurer of twenty societies for the reformation of one's neighbors. The initial thing which a man owes to the community is to be a good man himself. That is what Christ said to the rich young man in the

gospel; and that is what He says to-day to every college man, and every other man. The question is, What good thing shall I do? and the answer is, First of all, be as good as you can.

Thus our Lord tried Master Dives by the law of simple obedience. Then He tried him by the law of an earnest purpose. The young man had kept the commandments, but he was not satisfied. Nobody ought to be satisfied with that. "What lack I yet?" he cried. And Jesus answered, "Go, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

This He said not because He held that a man must be poor in order to be good. If He had believed that, He would have bidden the young man to destroy all that he had; instead of that he was told to give it away. He was to be poor, but the poor were to be rich. This He said not to the rich in general, but to this rich man in particular. Mary and Martha and Lazarus were rich. They were so rich that one time Mary broke at Jesus' feet an alabaster box of very precious ointment, worth several hundred dollars. They were never bidden to be poor. Neither were other rich persons whose houses Jesus visited. The truth is that while wealth and poverty are of immeasurable

moment to us, they meant little to Him. It seems incredible, but it is the fact that a good many of the things to get which men are continually making themselves miserable, about which men are going to war—sometimes in public, sometimes in private,—for which men are giving their whole lives and putting their immortal souls in pawn, were totally uninteresting to Him. Whether men were rich or poor, He did not care. It made no difference to Him. He did care supremely whether they were rich or poor in the currency of heaven. And when He saw that a man was so devoted to these lesser things that he was losing his sense of the value of better things, He tried to deliver that man out of his temptations.

So it was here. The rich young man was profoundly selfish. He was so selfish that he came to Jesus Christ and asked to be told some good thing to do not for the sake of others, nor for the sake of doing good, but for the advantage of his own soul. What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? The man was thinking of himself. Rich as he was, privileged as he was, with his possessions and his position, he had been brought up that way. There was not in his life between dawn and sunset any day, the least purpose to benefit his neighbor. The man was dissatisfied, he

knew not why. He longed for something which he had not, but what it was he could not tell. He knew that he was not living an eternal life, but in absolute ignorance he cried, "What lack I yet?" And Jesus told him plainly what he lacked. He had no earnest social purpose. Honestly, in his heart, he was intent upon himself. That is what was the matter with him. And when he was brought to the test, and it was proposed to him to do good to his fellow men at his own expense, he saw it, and drew back. He made the great refusal. He was sad at that saying and went away grieved, for he had great possessions.

THE WIND AND THE FIRE.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.—*Acts 2 : 2, 3.*

THE wind and the fire were symbols of spiritual realities. There was a sound which reminded those who heard it of the noise of a rushing mighty wind; and there was a sight which reminded those who saw it of the flaming of a hundred tiny tongues of fire; but beyond this comparison, the record tells us nothing. It is plain that we stand here in a domain to which the meteorologist has no access. The pentecostal wind could not have been measured by the instruments which tell the speed and direction of currents of air; the pentecostal fire would not have affected a thermometer. They were like the halos which glow about the heads of saints in pictures, at which nobody could light a candle.

In the "Holy Night" of Correggio, you remember how the stable of the nativity is lighted with the radiance which shines from the face of the Child. That is what the

painter saw. Very likely the shepherds, who had already seen a celestial light in the sky, saw it glowing again in the stable. No doubt, the holy mother saw it. But to a casual passer-by, or to a stable-boy coming in to feed the cows, there would have been no light except such as glimmered in the lantern. Probably the man in the street, hearing a commotion on the day of Pentecost in the upper room,—if that was the place,—and rushing in, would have missed all sound and hearing of the wind and fire. There is a good deal of difference in the details of the various descriptions of Saul's adventure on the Damascus road, but all accounts agree that none of Saul's companions saw or heard what he both saw and heard. To them there appeared a light and a sound; to him there appeared a face and a voice. It shows the difference between eyesight and insight.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit wonderfully revealed Himself to the disciples, filled them with a new consciousness of His divine presence, and blessed them. That is, in the midst of a world which is full of God, wherein we live continually in the sight of God, suddenly this little company of holy persons were made aware of God. Out of the infinite silence, God spoke to them. And it was as if the wind blew which swept across the face of

Elijah in the cleft of the rock ; it was as if the fire blazed amongst them, which Elijah saw before he heard the still small voice. That is as near as the narrator can get to it. The hearts of those good men and women were stirred as if a breeze were blowing from beyond the stars, and there was a light in their faces such as shines along the path of God.

There are two ways of describing an event, one statistical and the other symbolical. They are as different as photography is different from painting. The statistical narrative gives us the plain facts as they would have been reflected in a mirror, had one been hanging on the wall. The symbolical narrative gives us the facts interpreted, and to them adds still other facts of an intangible and spiritual sort, such as no looking-glass has ever seen, and for which there is no descriptive language except such as is used by poets and artists.

Take, for instance, the two accounts, which Dean Stanley has significantly set side by side from the Book of Genesis, of the migration of Abraham. Here is first the statistical narrative. "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan : and

they came unto Haran and dwelt there. . . . And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran ; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan : and into the land of Canaan they came." That is the matter-of-fact statement of what happened. That is how the thing looked to the neighbors. That is what people said about it as they watered their camels at Ur of the Chaldees. But there was more to it than that. Here is the symbolical narrative. "The Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee : and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great : and thou shalt be a blessing ; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee : and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." You see how much higher and richer that is, and in the best sense truer. There was an impulse in the heart of Abraham driving him out. He looked across the wide plains into the far future. He had hopes and purposes of which the men who pitched his tent knew nothing. This is expressed by the historian in symbol. He tells us that God

stood by the side of Abraham and spoke to him. The eternal God, maker of the universe of suns and stars, spoke to this man who dwelt among his flocks in Asia. Indeed, He did. The statement is in the language of poetry, but for the fact which is thus stated,—the fact that the impulse in the heart of Abraham came from on high,—no other words were strong enough.

So it is in the account of the day of Pentecost. It is very different from the description of the shipwreck in the same book. The shipwreck is described statistically. Every detail is set down precisely as it happened. Any sailor of the crew, telling about it afterwards, would have said the same things. But the events of Pentecost are described symbolically. That which happened here was too great to be put into the common phrases of matter-of-fact narration. To say simply that, being there assembled and praying, the hearts of the disciples were suddenly and wonderfully affected with an unusual sense of the presence of God, was not enough. The historian becomes a poet. The winds blow and the fires blaze. The dullest reader perceives that something extraordinary is taking place. That is the effect which the writer intends to produce. Or, rather, that is the effect which the event

itself did actually produce in the minds of those who experienced it. They came down out of the chamber of the Pentecostal blessing, and declared that the whole house had been shaken by a great wind, and that there had been tongues of fire in the room on all their heads. For we have got to put our emotions into the best words that we can find. The emotions, if they are deep and strong, if they are inspired of God, are too great for any words. How did you feel in that moment of sudden joy or surprise or grief, in that swift happiness of attainment after long and doubtful waiting, in that hour when the rapture of the consciousness of God filled your soul? How did you feel? You cannot adequately answer. St. Paul said that he felt one time as if he had been taken up into the third heaven. That was the best sentence he could find to hold his thought. The men and women of Pentecost said that they felt as if all the mighty winds of God were blowing and the fires of God were blazing. That was the best thing they could think of to say. Even then, it did not express their sense of awe and wonder; but it had to suffice, since there was nothing else to which they could liken it.

The truth is that nobody knows what happened in that hour of exaltation. It is de-

scribed in comparisons taken from the material world, but the event itself was in the domain of the spirit. All this about the wind and the fire is the endeavor to somehow express that which was essentially unutterable. It is an attempt to put into words a spiritual experience which transcended speech.

What did they mean to say? They meant, I think, to say that there, as they prayed, they became aware of God.

The blowing of the wind was a symbol of the mystery of God. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof and canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." So too is the Divine Spirit; surrounding us like the air which we breathe, as invisible, and as essential to our life. The burning of the fire was a symbol of the glory of God, of the brightness and the majesty of God; and it rested on their heads in token that the glorious and infinite God was considering them, caring for them, and blessing them.

A like thing happened, in 1655, in a country town in England. At Wanstead, in Essex, William Penn, afterwards the founder of a commonwealth, at that time a lad of twelve years, "was suddenly surprised with an in-

ward comfort and as he thought an external glory in the room, which gave rise to religious emotions, during which he had the strongest conviction of the being of a God, and that the soul of man was capable of enjoying communication with him. He believed also that the seal of Divinity had been put upon him at that moment, or that he had been awakened or called upon to a holy life." That was William Penn's pentecost. The wind did not blow, as it did at Jerusalem, but the fire burned,—the same fire, meaning the same thing.

It is a rare experience, but it has come again and again into the life of man. Some have perceived the voice of God in the rushing of a mighty wind; some have seen His face in the blazing of a sudden fire; some have heard articulate words out of the sky; some, as they knelt in church or in their own rooms, have been overpowered by a new sense of the divine presence. I am not concerned to inquire whether these sights and sounds were impressions made upon the senses or upon the soul only: there they were. Of whatever nature, physiological or psychological, there they happened. St. Paul, who had passed through one of these experiences, said that whether it was in the body or out of the body, he could not tell. The important thing is the

fact of the recognition of God. And of that there is no doubt. The men and women of pentecost, and hundreds of other men and women on other days and in other places, were made aware of God. Suddenly they perceived God. There He was with them in the room.

What I am trying to do is to show you that the day of pentecost is in line with all the other days, and that what God did then for the apostles and the holy women He will still do for us. Whitsunday is the commemoration not of a blessing which God gave once, and never gives again, but of a constant blessing which came then to those whose hearts were ready and receptive, and will come now to any one of us, if we will put ourselves in that position.

“ Henceforth my heart shall sigh no more,
For olden time and holier shore :
God’s love and blessing, then and there,
Are now and here and everywhere.”

For us too the pentecostal wind will blow, the fire will burn. For the wind and the fire are but symbols of the divine presence.

The Whitsunday saints were sure of God. That is what made the difference between that day and all the other past days of their

lives. Now at last, after long blundering and questioning and waiting and doubting, they were sure of God.

They had lived in the very presence of Jesus Christ, and yet had been unaware of God. Occasionally, their eyes must have been opened to catch at least a glimmer of His presence; but still, they knew Him not. Or, if they knew Him, it was but such knowledge as is implied in the acceptance of a general belief, and in the recitation of a common creed. Of course, they knew of God's existence. But they did not know God so that the consciousness of Him dominated all their life.

There they were, good men, religious men, the daily companions of Jesus, and yet unaware of God. You remember how, at the very end of all His instruction of them, in the midst of the last lesson, they said, "Lord, show us the Father!" And you remember how, the next day, they all fled. The man who is aware of God does not run away. Nobody can make him afraid. That is one of the signs of the recognition of God. After the day of pentecost, no apostle turned his back on danger.

There they were, then, on the morning of that day, waiting for the promise of the Father, waiting for the fulfilment of the word

of Christ. "I have yet many things to say unto you," He had told them, "but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." And as they waited, day after day, meditating and praying, looking back over all that He had said and done, trying to get it into their hearts and lives, asking God to help them, suddenly the Spirit came. It was as when one studies a great matter for a long time in vain, and one day the meaning of it flashes in upon the mind. That is a coming of the Spirit. It was as when one, after long deliberation, reaches a decision, and everything is cleared up and thenceforth life goes on along a straight way. Then too the Spirit comes. There they knelt, praying their prayers, very much as we do, trying to realize God; and suddenly, nobody knows how,—swiftly and silently like the operation of the eternal forces,—a great light broke upon their souls. After that, everything was different. They lived on a new earth under a new heavens. The wind seemed to be blowing all about them, the fire seemed to be blazing on their heads, and they came out new men. Thenceforth, they were absolutely sure of God: and they lived like men who are continually aware of God.

God grant us also the pentecostal blessing. God give us grace to know Him ; that we may live in the continual consciousness of His presence. God help us, who are trying so ineffectively to live the life of religion ; who pray, but so often with indifference ; and who go about in God's world, thinking of God so little ; who fall so often into foolish temptations, and behave ourselves so unworthily of our Christian name ; who say the creed so often and realize it so seldom ; who are so unaware of God,—God help us, as He helped the Whitsunday congregation at the beginning. Then when we pray, we will address God as we would speak to a present friend. In our daily tasks, we will increase our faithfulness and diligence and joy by the remembrance that we are fellow laborers with God. In our continual temptations, we will be assisted by the assurance that God sees what we do, and hears what we say. As we walk abroad, in these perfect days, we will be like our parents in the oldest of all beautiful stories, who beheld the Lord God walking beside them under the shade of the trees in the cool of the day. Only we will not fear, as they did ; but will put out our hand to take His hand. Then shall the wind which blows along the summer road, and the fire which

shines in the summer sun, be revelations of the eternal God, as they were that old day in Jerusalem. We will be aware of God; and every common day will be a pentecost.

AT THE TABLE OF ZACCHEUS

And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord : Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor ; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.—*Luke 19 : 8.*

THE Lord sat at the table in the house of Zaccheus. He sat often at men's tables. The Son of Man, as He said Himself, came eating and drinking ; and there is accordingly a great deal in the New Testament about eating and drinking. These necessary and pleasant acts appear in these pages as intimately connected with the life and teaching of Jesus, and with the Christian religion.

As soon as Christ has gathered about Him a little group of disciples, they are all invited to dinner, and they accept the invitation : and the Master not only sits at the table but contributes to the feast. When He sees a multitude approaching in a place remote from inns or houses, His first thought is one of hospitality : How shall we provide bread that these may eat ? And He makes them all sit down in order on the green grass and feeds them. He is continually illuminating and applying

His spiritual instruction by means of illustrations taken from the table. The parable of the great supper, the discourse at Capernaum on the Bread of Life, the picturing of the joys to come under the figure of a banquet, will occur to every reader of the Bible. He institutes a social meal as the characteristic sacred rite of His religion, and assembles our most holy memories and associations about the eating of bread and the drinking of wine. To-day the most important article of furniture in a Christian Church is a table,—a supper-table, for the common meal of the Christian family. The homely outlines of the table may be lost in the glories of carving or hidden beneath embroidered cloths, but it is a table, nevertheless.

We have no reason to think that our Lord entered into the social pleasures of His time simply from a sense of duty, or that He went to dinner in order to get a good chance to preach a sermon to the host. He went because He liked to go. He saw, of course, the spiritual opportunities of society. He knew that in order to speak to men effectively, it is necessary first to understand them, and then to be in sympathy with them; and it is plain that a natural way to gain this understanding and show this sympathy is to meet men

familiarly, sitting beside them at their tables. But Jesus at the table comes closer to our common life than that. He sanctifies our simplest and most natural enjoyments. He brings our domestic and social interests within the range of religion. He teaches us that whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we may do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. He contradicts that narrow conception of religion which accounts that praying is an act of religion, and that the definite doing of a Christian deed is an act of religion, but that here religion stops. True religion never stops. It takes in the whole of life. It includes our commonest enjoyments. To partake of the Lord's Supper is indeed to enter into a high privilege of religion, but we are also behaving ourselves as Christian persons when we sit cheerfully at our own tables or at the tables of our neighbors, when we break bread at home, like the earliest disciples, and eat our meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

The Lord sat at the table of Zaccheus a self-invited guest. Zaccheus had gone out that morning merely to see Him as He passed by in the street. The idea of asking Him to dinner had not so much as entered his mind. Zaccheus was a rich man, but no respectable people dined with him. It was suggested some

time ago that men who had made fortunes in dishonest or unjust ways should be made to feel the disapproval of society: that was the plan which was in full force in Jerusalem and Jericho. Zaccheus had made his money in a business which his neighbors detested, and they showed him plainly what they thought of him. When in his eagerness "to see Jesus who He was," he climbed up into a tree, being short of stature, the crowd hooted at him. At least, we may guess that it was from some derisive call that the Master learned the publican's name. There he was, the most unpopular citizen of Jericho, looking down out of a sycamore-tree beside the road, with everybody pointing to him and shouting at him. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

That shows how much our Lord cared for popularity. In the midst of this crowd, acclaiming Him and deriding Zaccheus, Jesus takes the part of Zaccheus. Let us understand it clearly. Zaccheus was a publican, but there are no publicans in our part of the country. The name does not mean much to us. Let us get at it in this way: Zaccheus is a contractor, who is notorious for his extor-

tions ; Zaccheus is a landlord, whose tenements are an offense to all good citizens ; Zaccheus is the keeper of the worst saloon or gambling place in Jericho. That is the kind of man he was. The good people of Jericho hated the sight of Zaccheus, and they had reason to hate him. It was not all prejudice. It was not simply the natural enmity of a subdued people against the man who represented their masters, and collected their masters' taxes. Zaccheus was a robber. Under the cover of law, by false accusation, as he himself confesses, he took money out of people's pockets. It is true that he was very desirous to see Jesus, and that may mean that already he was looking towards a better life ; the fact that he made haste and came down out of the tree and received Him joyfully, would seem to indicate that. Nevertheless, when Jesus looked up and saw Zaccheus, He saw a man of whom He probably knew nothing except that everybody seemed to hate him. And He chose that man to dine with, on that account. The great spiritual Master comes to town, and declining all courtesies of the clergy and chief citizens, He goes to dinner with a man who ought to be in jail.

Of course, everybody was scandalized. "When they saw it, they all murmured."

That is, they began at once to talk, each with his neighbor, and to say how astonishing and objectionable it was. He has gone, they said, to be guest with a man that is a sinner ! To them that was an amazing thing : to Him, it was not only natural but imperative ; it was the only thing to do. That was the difference between them. Religion for them was a comfortable possession of personal privilege, with which a man might be content, being approved of God and sure of everlasting salvation. Religion for Him was a divine impulse, a "passion of compassion," a spirit of fraternal affection whereby whenever He saw anybody whom He could help He was irresistibly moved to help him. Jesus looked about in every company and went straight to the person who needed Him most. That is what He meant when He said that He came as a physician to minister not to the well but to the sick. He came to Jericho as a physician, and His eye lighted upon Zaccheus. The Pharisees, with their satisfied and selfish souls, could not understand Him. The Pharisees have never understood Him.

It is plain that we have here two irreconcilable conceptions of religion. According to one idea, religion is for the privileged ; they are to enjoy it by themselves ; they are to en-

shrine it in beautiful churches where strangers are not welcome; they are to thank God that they are not as other men are; and as for these other men, they are to content themselves with disapproving of them; they will not dream of dining with them, or of dealing with them in any fraternal or even courteous fashion. According to the other idea, religion is possessed by the privileged in order that they may extend the truth of it and the blessing of it as speedily as they may among the unprivileged; their hearts and their hands go out to those who are less happy than they are; and finding those whom they confidently believe to be mistaken, whether in conduct or in creed, straightway they desire to make friends with them that they may persuade them into the better way.

Zaccheus, being treated in this friendly manner, was immediately persuaded. And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. Why did he do that? He had awaked that morning without a single generous impulse in his soul, an avaricious, keen, close, over-reaching person, intent on getting every possible dollar out of his neighbors, caring

nothing for the poor. And here he stands, to the amazement of his friends, and probably to the amazement of himself, and gives away more than half his fortune. What has touched the heart of Zaccheus? A fraternal word. It is likely that no respectable person had spoken pleasantly to Zaccheus for a year. Everybody had treated him in accordance with his bad name. And the consequence was that he had gone on deserving his bad name more and more. Nobody believed in him, and he gave nobody occasion to believe in him. Then came Jesus Christ, holding out His friendly hand, treating him like an honest man, sitting at his table, and never preaching at him a single word of a sermon: and Zaccheus was moved profoundly. And he stood up, saying what he did, and became a new man.

That was our Lord's way. He helped man after man by the influence of His personal friendship. He was known as the friend of publicans and sinners, of those who had no friends. He won them into ways of righteousness by going out of His way to be good to them. They responded, because they were so made as to respond to that sort of appeal. That is human nature. The parable of the contention between the wind and the sun as to which could most quickly persuade a traveler

to take off his coat, is very old, but it has not even yet been taken much to heart. We try to change the minds or lives of others by abusing them, by punishing them, by scolding them, by giving them hard names, by entering into angry argument with them. And we fail always. We might as well contradict the law of gravitation. It is human nature to stand out strong and hard against that manner of approach. The will asserts itself. The person who is in error holds only the more stoutly to his error. He was in some doubt about it before you went at him in that belligerent fashion, and would presently have changed his way or his opinion: but you have prevented that. You have made a bad matter worse.

Take it in the extreme case of such misconduct as sends a man to prison. The old way, the universal way until very recent years, was to treat the prisoner with all possible severity; he was made to suffer; he was regarded as a reprobate in whom there was no likelihood of betterment. The result was that he accepted the opinion of his respectable neighbors and justified it abundantly. He endured his sentence, and came out definitely confirmed in an evil life, worse than he went in. To-day we are trying the Lord's plan with Zaccheus. First offenders charged with minor offenses

instead of being thrown into jail are being met with kindness and consideration. They are being set at liberty under the watch and word of a wise, responsible and sympathetic person whose mission is to help them out of their hard places, to give them friendly counsel, and to set them in the right way. This new Christian wisdom is being brought more and more into the whole system of treatment of the delinquent classes. It is at the heart of all the new prison reform. It has been discovered in the prisons that better results are gained by rewards than by punishments. Jesus Christ knew that, and exemplified it in the case of Zaccheus.

Take it in the very different matter of ecclesiastical controversy. The Zaccheus of this instance is the man who teaches what we believe to be both untrue and dangerous. We are keenly alive to the necessity of putting a stop to that kind of teaching. The natural thing to do, as it seems to us, is to silence the teacher. Let us assail him with all possible weapons ; let us inform him that he is a heretic and a liar and a traitor to his sacred trusts. That is an easy thing to do, but the trouble is that it does not accomplish our purpose. We ought to know that. The thing has been tried often enough in the course of Christian his-

tory, and it does not succeed. It does not succeed in reclaiming the heretic from the error of his ways, nor does it succeed in preventing others from agreeing with him. On the contrary, it confirms him in his erroneous position, and gains him an increasing number of sympathetic disciples. The people who employ this method of assault may know a great deal about theology, but they are densely ignorant of human nature. What is needed is fraternal feeling and patience. Let the error be shown reasonably, fairly, with large and confident cheerfulness, with some sense of humor, with the saving grace of imagination, and without foolish adjectives. Give the man a decent chance to change his mind with dignity.

So it is in regard to matters much nearer to us, social and domestic. Zaccheus is in our neighborhood, or in our family. Anybody of whom we easily think ill is Zaccheus. Let us try the Christian experiment of thinking well of him: not of his faults, not of his blunders,—that is impossible. I do not mean any such artificial affection. But of him, let us think well: that is, let us assure ourselves that Zaccheus is not so bad as he seems, that his innermost motives are right, that the thing which he needs is such fraternal faith and friendliness as shall take him out of his defiant

attitude, and make him show the good which is in him.

The truth is that other people are very like ourselves. We have our faults, as God and our neighbors know; we make foolish blunders, and say and do things for which we are ashamed; but we mean well, and the good in us is in majority. If we are called very sharply to account for our mistakes, we cannot help resenting it, and we are likely to continue in the mistakes just to vindicate our independence. But if we are made cheerfully to know that our friends disagree or disapprove we are likely, if we are left alone, to amend ourselves; and other people are very like ourselves.

Let us, then, follow the Lord's example. Let us appreciate the predominant goodness of the world. Let us believe in our neighbors, in our employees, in our children. Let us keep back the sharp word which will serve only to defeat our purpose, and bring out another,—dull though it be,—which will gain at the same time our purpose and our friend.

THE LORD'S BROTHER.

After that, He appeared to James.—1 *Cor.* 15 : 7.

CONCERNING this appearance of our Lord to James, we have no other notice than these words. Of the place, or time, or circumstances we know nothing. But we do know something about James.

He was our Lord's brother.

There were four brothers: James, Joses, Jude and Simon; and several sisters. The carpenter's house at Nazareth was full of children. Jesus referred once to the games which they played. They pretended to be dancing at a wedding, or to be crying at a funeral. Sometimes some of them would be offended and refuse to play. "Whereunto," He said, "shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows. And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not wept." When Jesus took up the little children in His arms He knew how to do it by experience. As the oldest child He had taken care of the younger. Up to the time when He was six-

teen years of age there must always have been a baby in the house.

For there is no substantial basis for the theory that Joseph was a widower when he married Mary, and brought these six or seven children with him. That was the conjecture of men to whom the monastic life was the true pattern of good living. There is no reason to doubt that our Lord grew up in a normal household, in a large family, amidst the voices of young children.

Of the sisters of our Lord, and of His brothers Joses and Simon, we have no knowledge. Even tradition is silent regarding them. St. Paul, who had some acquaintance with our Lord's brothers, says that when he knew them they were married and that their wives went with them on their missionary journeys. That is a pleasant thing to know; but we cannot tell whether he referred to all four of the brothers or only to James and Jude.

Jude is said to have written the epistle which bears his name, in which he describes himself as the brother of James. But the name was a common one, and the tradition is questioned.

James, however, stands out a distinct figure concerning whom we have much information: most of it in the Acts of the Apostles.

The life of James was divided into two parts by the event which St. Paul has set down in the text. The only thing which we are told about the first part of his life is that he was not in sympathy with Jesus. This was true of all the brethren, and apparently, at times, of the holy mother herself. For we read that as He taught the people His mother and His brethren stood on the outskirts of the crowd, desiring to speak with Him, evidently for the purpose of stopping Him and getting Him away. For there, in the presence of them all He declared His separation from His family, saying, "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?" And He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples, and said, "Behold My mother and My brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." This is to be connected with the statement that His friends, or, as the word may be translated, His kinsfolk, went out to lay hold on Him, for they said, "He is beside Himself!" That is what James thought of Him. Indeed we are informed with all plainness, and in so many words, that His brother did not believe in Him. It helps us to understand what He meant when He said that the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.

He had no home, because His ministry had made this separation between Him and His family. There were other friends who gathered about Him, and gave Him their faith, their allegiance and their love ; but James and Joses and Jude and Simon had no part in His life.

Naturally, the arrest, the trial and the execution of Jesus would serve only to emphasize this situation. We can easily imagine what they said at home. They lamented His bitter fate. His mother, loving Him with a mother's love, stood beside Him as He died. But they all felt that He had foolishly brought His fate upon His head. He should have stayed at home, minding His own business, going quietly to church like other people, paying proper respect to what the rabbi said, and keeping the law.

So He died upon the cross, and that was logically the end. But behold, instead of being the end, it was the beginning. The apostles meet, and the brethren of the Lord meet with them. The apostles and the brethren, who up to this moment have been at variance, are now united. And presently, after a few years, when St. Paul visits Jerusalem, he finds James, the Lord's brother, the accepted and revered head of the apostolic company : John, the disciple whom Jesus

loved, and Peter, the disciple on whose confession of confidence the church was founded, being cheerfully subordinate to him. James, Peter and John, he says, "seemed to be pillars"; but he puts James first. The unbeliever is now the chief believer.

This, of course, is a remarkable evidence of the resurrection. It is the more remarkable because no use is made of it in the apostolic argument. We read it between the lines. Nothing can be more certain that something of an extraordinary nature happened to convert James. St. Paul tells us what it was: the crucified Lord, his brother, dead and buried, appeared to him. I will not stop to dwell upon the value of this evidence, for I am concerned at present with the unbelief rather than with the belief of the Lord's brother. But everybody must see that this is a singular and noteworthy witness to the resurrection. For there are many stories of appearances after death: dim and vague, indeed, are the accounts, like the sights which they report, sometimes plain delusion, sometimes the fantastic result of a disorder of the mind, or of a disease of the nerves, and yet to be taken seriously into account by reason of the very number, universality and persistence of the tales. Commonly, however, the spirit beats

retreat at the approach of unbelief. The man of hard sense, unemotional, logical, and instinctively incredulous sees no ghosts. Such a man, among the apostles, was Thomas. But Thomas may have been over-influenced by the convictions of his friends. James had no friends among the believers in the resurrection. In the nature of things, he had disliked the men who had gathered about his brother. The fact that they believed was but a further reason for his unbelief. That is the way of human nature. It meant much to a proud man like James to come forward into a company of persons whom he had alienated by his bitter words, and say, "I was mistaken. You who stood beside Him did the thing which was right. I who showed Him no sympathy was in the wrong." That was a hard thing to say. Why did he say it? Because he had seen Jesus alive after the death upon the cross.

But I am concerned, as I said, not with the belief but with the unbelief of James. How was it that a good man, a man so good that after all that had happened the apostles made him the head of the church in Jerusalem,—how was it that he lived for thirty years in the same house with Jesus, and did not believe in Him?

When we are told that James and the others did not believe in our Lord the meaning is not that they doubted His word: that would have been impossible. Nor does it mean that they did not love Him: of course they loved Him. What it means is that they did not approve of Him. They did not like the things which He said and did. And we may properly remember that in this they agreed with the most eminent and the most pious persons of that day. You recollect what our Lord's own friends and neighbors did in His own town after He had preached in their synagogue. They rose up, these good folk who had known Him well for a generation, since they were boys together, and proposed to throw Him over the side of the hill. The mind of James was the same mind as that of the Nazareth rabbi. Everybody whom James knew, with but few exceptions, thought that his brother was an objectionable person.

That may have made no impression upon James. He had sufficient reason, as it seemed, in his own convictions. For we know James: we know what sort of man he was. The fact that he acted as presiding officer at the apostolic conference before which Paul appeared shows that he had a strong personality, that he inspired others with respect, that he

had a dignified and commanding manner. He decided the debate in favor of Paul; that is, he declared on behalf of the apostles that Gentiles should be admitted to membership in the Christian Church without being compelled to keep the Jewish law. But the debate continued after the conference adjourned. It was a question of tremendous importance. The settlement of it defined the position of the followers of Jesus Christ, whether they were a Jewish sect, or an independent company of new believers. And James personally held the Jewish opinion. The life of Paul was made miserable by men who followed him on his journeys and opposed his liberal teachings, and of these men it is significantly said that they came from James. Moreover, an ancient and credible tradition asserts that James to the end of his life kept the old law to the smallest particular. He attended the services of the temple and of the synagogue with devout punctuality. He was a Christian, and the head of the Christian Church in the place of its beginning, but he was at the same time a Jew.

That is, James, with all his natural goodness, was a precise, formal, and legalistic person. That was his temperament. He must have been like that even in his youth. He

was of course brought up to keep the common law, and to mind the rubrics, and to follow the manifold regulations of an artificial and mechanical religion. That was the best training which Joseph and Mary, good church people, knew how to give. And James liked it. That was the sort of thing in which he found delight.

Jesus, on the other hand, liked it not at all. Nobody ever lived whose religion was more natural, more free, more unconventional. The difference, there in Nazareth, between the religion of James and the religion of Jesus was like the difference between a dimly lighted room whose air is heavy with incense and the top of a high hill where the wind blows in the trees. And the consequence was, to put it with all frankness, that Jesus shocked James every day. The Lord's way of looking at things scandalized the Lord's brother. Indeed, as we have seen, it distressed the whole family.

Then when He came out and said in public what He had long said in private, when He confronted and contradicted and defied the social ideal and the ecclesiastical ideal of His day, anybody can see how James felt. Every impulse of his precise nature resented this free handling of matters ancient, settled and venerable. Jesus associated freely with publicans

and sinners: He dined at a publican's table, and took the publican into the company of the twelve apostles. James would have cut off three fingers rather than do a thing like that. Jesus disregarded many of the common regulations, paid no heed to the ceremonial worship about which His fellow churchmen were so punctilious, and said with all plainness that it mattered little what men ate; a Jew might eat pork if he chose; the thing that really mattered was not the food which went into a man's mouth but the words which came out. It is utterly impossible for us to understand how deeply that offended James. It contradicted his most sacred prejudices.

I suppose that Mary and Martha found that it was hard for them to live together in perfect peace: Martha with her active, bustling, housewifely ways, "cumbered," as the book says, "with much serving"; and Mary with her leisurely habit of dreaming in the daytime. They were very different. It is to be remembered for our admonition that Martha was the one who made complaint. We may be equally sure that at Nazareth the complaints came from James. How much more real is it to us, and closer to our common life, than if they had all been perfectly serene saints. How it illuminates that hard saying

in which we are told that our Lord was tempted in all things like as we are. They who find the art of living with others the most difficult of arts may profitably remember that our Lord encountered its difficulty in His experience with His brother James.

So they lived together and apart, and the crucifixion came, and the resurrection, and the Lord was seen of James. He sought out James. There He stood holding out His blessed hands of reconciliation and affection. And James,—we doubt not,—James the precise, the conventional, the conservative, the formal, fell down upon his knees before Him. Even so, his nature was not changed. He was converted, but not transformed. Conversion may be a speedy process, as quick as turning round; but transformation takes a longer time, and comes only by prayer and patience. It is not likely that James ever understood Jesus. The formalist has always found Him hard to understand. He was of the same temperament still, a dry, punctilious, precise person. But thenceforward James was a Christian. He was a devoted disciple of Him in whom he now recognized an elder brother, in all senses, human and divine. The Lord appeared to him, and blessed him, and took him just as he was into His confidence.

James is the type of extreme propriety. In the middle ages he was a schoolman, profoundly interested in microscopic distinctions of doctrine, an enemy of heretics. In the sixteenth century he came to Massachusetts, wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a wide white collar, and laid down the law of the Sabbath. He was the patron saint of the eighteenth century moralists. Whatever is unconventional in manner, in expression, in belief, in ritual, offends him still. He is easily shocked. He cannot help it. He is not at present a popular person, for ours is an unconventional generation, demanding freedom and delighting in it, and liking the new better than the old. We are resentful of precision.

Let us remember that the Lord took particular pains to bring James into the Christian company. He was seen of James, in a personal conference. He knew that the church had need of just that conservative, slow, cautious, and precise spirit which James represented. There was need of freedom, and enthusiasm, and boldness, and the radical mind: St. Paul stood for all that. But St. James also had his place, and has it still. Let us be very respectful to St. James; disagreeing with him at many points, but recognizing and humbly imitating his profound earnest-

ness, the strength of his conviction, his serious mind, and the goodness of his life, remembering the courtesy and consideration of the risen Christ.

ONE FROM TEN.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks.—*Luke 17:15.*

NINE men went straight on. Out of the ten only one turned back to say, "I thank you."

The ten had been deserted of all men. They had been forbidden to live any longer in the society of their friends. They had been commanded to cry "Unclean! unclean!" when they saw anybody coming their way; warning the passer-by, that he might take the other side of the road. They were under the ban. Both the priest and the doctor were against them. That is, the two persons to whom the sick and distressed turn naturally for comfort, they whose whole existence is for the purpose of ministering to their neighbors in disease and pain, had shut their doors against such folk as these. There they were in the streets, forlorn and friendless. And thus forsaken of all men, thrust out by all men, these ten had consorted together, and had associated

themselves into a society of common sorrow, a fraternity of desolation—ten outcasts, ten beggars, ten lepers.

Then one day, the ten beheld across a field one of whom they had heard that He was the friend of those who had no friends,—the friend of publicans, and of sinners, and even of lepers. He was the friend of lepers. He had been known once to show some kindness to a leper. Some said that it had happened more than once. He had actually put out His hand and touched a leper. This new teacher, of whom many strange things were reported, had touched a leper and healed him. It seemed incredible—not that He should heal him, but that He should touch him with His hand.

And then He came along the road, and the ten saw Him. The lepers saw the friend of lepers. And they joined their pitiful voices in a cry to Him that He would touch them also, and heal them: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" And He stopped, and did have mercy on them. He sent them to show themselves to the priests. And it came to pass that as they went they were cleansed. Then it was that nine of them went straight on: out of the ten only one turned back to thank the healer.

The nine went on to take up their old life

again. Step by step, along the way, as the bonds of their leprosy were loosed, a new strength came into their arms, a new light shone in their faces, and a new hope lifted up their hearts. I cannot think that they were altogether ungrateful persons. That is not human nature. They could not have looked into the unexpected future which was thus opening before them, and into which they were going as one goes out of bondage into freedom, without a memory of Him who had made that future possible, and a deeply grateful memory. Jesus had not passed out of their thoughts. That is quite unlikely.

The men were not ungrateful. They were only silent. They were grateful enough in their hearts; they were singing and making melody in their hearts. But nobody would have known it, for no note of the songs got into their lips.

This was partly because they knew not what to say. Of all emotions, joy is the most difficult to bring into speech. Sorrow seeks expression. Think of the notable scenes in which the masters of fiction have pictured the crisis of human life. The best are the pathetic and the tragic. Gratitude is especially hard to utter. It eludes the pen and the tongue. It can be seen in the eyes, but it rarely finds

adequate expression. We try in vain to say all that we feel. There is much more gratitude and appreciation in the world than we get credit for. If we should ever outgrow spoken language and for words substitute thoughts, so that conversation should be carried on without words as communication is already effected without wires, and mind should speak with mind, there would be no difficulty about thanksgiving. There are few emotions that would gain more in power of expression. Everybody who is good to us will know in that day just how appreciative we are.

This, however, was not the chief reason for the silence of the men who gave no thanks. They might have said something. It is not likely that the one who turned back was very eloquent: he probably stammered and stumbled in his speech. They might, at least, have fallen at the Master's feet, and thus even in silence have assured Him that their hearts were full of affection and of adoration. The trouble was not so much that they did not know what to say, as that they did not consider that they needed to say anything. They did not think that He who had blessed them cared whether they showed their gratitude or not. He did care. His instant question, "Where are the nine?" makes that plain.

It is true that the gratitude which He sought and missed was not for Himself. "There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger." It was God to whom He would have the glory given. If, however, there were no more to it than that, it is hard to see wherein the nine failed. They went on to the priests; that is, to the temple, where the priests performed their offices. What better place could they have chosen for the gift of their gratitude to God! There in that hallowed sanctuary, in the appointed services and with the appointed offerings, let them give God the glory. Was not that the natural and proper thing to do? On they go along the road, obeying Christ's command; and as they go, with every step, their leprosy is cleansed; and there they are, well men. Then they stop and consult together, companions now in great joy as they had been companions in distress; and one says, What shall we do? Shall we not go back and thank Him? and another says, "No, we are doing as He told us, we are going to the priests. Let us give God the glory. Let us kneel before His altar in His house." And to this they all agree save one, and he, curiously enough is a Samaritan; that is, he is a person who is out of accord with priests. It is notorious that the Jews have no dealings

with the Samaritans. The fact that this Samaritan was of the number of these ten shows that their misery was so great that it overbalanced all their natural prejudices. Nine Jews in sound health would not have tolerated the company of a Samaritan. Indeed, as they got better they may have begun to look askance at the stranger with whom in their affliction they had fraternized. Anyhow, the priest had nothing for him. The others might go on to kneel before the altar in the temple, he would go back to kneel in the dust by the side of the road, and to offer his thanksgivings in the presence of Him who had healed him. And this was what Jesus wanted. The man came, and glorified God, but in his gift of praise to God there was a human, personal element. He glorified God, the gospel tells us, but he fell down on his face at Jesus' feet, and gave Jesus thanks. And Jesus liked that.

He liked the simple courtesy of it. He showed on several occasions that He set a high value on good manners. It made a difference to Him whether or not He was treated with the consideration which is rightly due from host to guest. He saw in little things symbols of large realities. It pleased Him to have affection and regard expressed in gentle ways.

And He liked the straightforward directness

of it. The man was honestly grateful and he came and said so. And in that act he gave Christ pleasure. That is the fact to which the narrative bears witness, and which we ought especially to consider as we read about it on such a day as this. It is natural for us to think of the saying of prayers and the singing of praises from the point of view of our own selves. But our Lord's pleasure in this man's frank gratitude reminds us that there is another and divine side to all this. He who by precept and by example reveals to us the nature and will of the Eternal, teaches us here and elsewhere that God cares: that God has pleasure in our prayers and in our praises: that therein we render some small return to Him for all the joy with which He fills our lives.

We do thank God for most of the uncommon blessings. A sudden danger, a sharp sickness, brings us so close to the great realities that God seems nearer to us than usual. When the danger is passed, or the crisis of the disease is reached and safely turned, we think of God, and the grateful feelings of our heart find expression at our lips.

But we ought to thank God also for all the daily blessings, for our health, friends, food and raiment, and all the other comforts and

conveniences of life, for all the manifold mercies and loving kindnesses of Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. Christ taught the truth, which was long obscured, but in our day is emphasized by clearer knowledge of the world of nature, that our heavenly Father is forever present in the world and forever active in it. We call the laws of nature by appropriate Latin names, and are tempted to imagine that we understand them because we have thus named them. But so are the mountains of the moon named. So are the fixed stars named. So is radium, the latest of the mysteries, given a name. Behind them all is God. What we call natural law is but God's customary way.

The Hebrews were very wise in their poetic and religious histories, wherein they ascribed all things to God's direct action. If the army lost the battle, God had turned His face against that army. If the rain descended and the wind blew, God was in the wind and in the rain. It was all profoundly true. God is in all the experiences of common life. All is of Him, in whom our life is lived.

Thus the homeliest blessings come from the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. We ought to be thankful to Him for them all : for all the smallest joys of a good year ; for

the divine protection ; for our prosperity ; for the fact that we are alive to-day, and able to be here in the house of God ; for our escape from a hundred ills which we feared as the weeks passed, but which did not fall upon us ; for innumerable and blessed assistances in temptation, by reason of which we are no worse than we are, thank God ; for daily joys past counting up. Praise and thanksgiving be to God who has poured His benefits upon us, in our own individual lives.

Then we remember the blessings which we share with those nearest to us, in the family. Thanksgiving Day has a distinctively domestic meaning. It is the festival of the family. It cannot be satisfactorily observed in a hotel, or in most boarding houses, or by anybody who sits alone at dinner. It needs children and relatives, to fill it with the proper cheer ; or the presence of dear friends. It is the homeliest of our days of observation,—homeliest in the best sense of that word, as being sacred to the home, as recalling the time when people thought that God had His dwelling in their home, with the hearth for His shrine and altar, and the fire blazing upon it in His sacred honor : and were right about it. To-day we worship the God of the household, returning to the simple faith of those remote ancestors

of ours who lived when every father was a priest and every meal a sacrament. To-day we consider with gratitude the protection of God, the good guidance of God, the love of God who is the Father of us all, revealed to us in so many ways under our own roof. Praise and thanksgiving be to Him who, during this past year has poured His benefits upon us in our homes.

This is the most ancient of all our holy days. It is true that it had its specific beginning in the experiences of our ancestors here upon these shores early in the seventeenth century. But it antedates the passover : it precedes the pyramids ; it is before history, even before civilization. It had its origin in the instincts of primeval man, and was celebrated at the gate of Eden. Thanksgiving Day is the most ancient and the most universal of all our festivals. Therein our calendar agrees with the sacred year of every religion. All men everywhere in this time of harvest have met together throughout all ages, and are still meeting for the purpose which assembles us to-day, to give thanks to God for the ingathering of the fruits of the earth. For us who go back and forth about our business over paved streets the agricultural aspects of this day are in the remote background of our thoughts.

We try to return to the sturdy joy of our grandparents, to whom the harvest was a personal experience, and it is like the difference between the symbolic sheaves with which we deck the altar and the real sheaves, acre on acre, golden in the sun, silver in the harvest moon, shining in the fields. But the harvest is essential: let us remember that. We cannot live without it. To-day we praise the Lord for the kindly fruits of the earth, for the labors of the husbandman wherein he is a fellow laborer with God, for fire and heat, for frost and cold, for the succession of the seasons, and all the divine elemental forces. O, let the earth bless the Lord: yea, let it praise Him and magnify Him forever.

Finally, as good citizens, we give God thanks for all the large mercies of the year, national and international, seeing God's great working there; sometimes understanding it and sometimes not, but conscious, nevertheless, and through all, of His abiding presence, of His patient dealing with the human will. We perceive, as we review the year, that little by little, swinging back yet coming on like the rising tide, the kingdom of heaven invades the world and slowly—very slowly, but surely,—takes possession of it. Thank God for that, and for all the good men and women, who, in

the face of difficulty and defeat, in our huge misgoverned cities, in our deserted villages, in the perplexities of our vast problems, are bringing the good causes forward, in His name. It is His world ; that is the truth which makes thanksgiving reasonable. It is His world, made by Him, redeemed by Him, sanctified by Him, growing year by year to fill the measure of His plan. The movement of the nations is like the flight of the birds, in spring and fall—voluntary, yet divinely guided. And as we behold it, as we feel the thrill of it in our own experience, we praise God : saying no longer, The Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ; but the Lord liveth which brought up and which led our fathers to the shores of this new continent, and here established them a nation, and here prospered them and made them a great people ; the Lord liveth who to-day in every land, in peace and in war, is guiding the peoples of the earth.

O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord.
O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.
O ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord, praise His name, come before Him with thanksgiving, magnify Him forever.

SAINTS IN SUMMER.

Thou hast set all the borders of the earth ; Thou hast made summer.—*Ps.* 74 : 18.

LET us consider now some of the elements of a Christian vacation.

The first is recreation. The meaning of recreation is written plain in the word itself. It is that which recreates us, giving us a clearer mind and a stronger body. Simple rest goes far towards doing that. To escape from our anxieties, to put our work behind us, to get out of hearing of the importunate demands which prevent our peace, is both helpful and necessary. We ought to do it. It need not be a selfish act. It is for our good in order that it may be for the general good. It is not merely for his own sake that the teacher, the minister or the merchant takes a vacation ; it is also for the sake of the school, the parish, and the business, all of which need a man at his best.

Indeed, there is a selfishness of self-sacrifice. Here is one who works and works for the sake of a family, or of a community, or of a cause, reaching the limit of his natural strength and going consciously beyond it, and then breaks

down, falls into some sort of sickness. That is the poorest kind of social or spiritual economy. The work which ought to have gone on, stops ; and even before it stops, it is done inefficiently ; the worker has no strength nor spirit for it. It looks like self-sacrifice. People say, He gave himself for the good of others. Sometimes that is true. Sometimes, under conditions which leave no choice, it is the sincerest self-sacrifice. But commonly, it is the sacrifice of the work as well as of the worker. A recognition of the value of rest, a reservation of strength for future use, a wise intermingling of pleasure and play with the earnest occupations of life, will enable the prudent worker to go on day after day, and year after year. Charlemagne went to bed regularly at noon and slept for an hour, and still had time to administer the affairs of the whole civilized society of his day : there are mothers of small families who feel that the demands upon them are so great that they cannot take such rest as that. The truth is that both the mothers and the families would be the happier for it.

This is the meaning of the fourth commandment. It is the divine announcement of the necessity of rest. Once a week, the commandment says, stop work. Take a good rest, you and your wife, and your family, and all

the members of your household. The Sabbath rest, it is true, came to be so interpreted as to make the rest day not only the dullest but the most difficult day of the week. But that was the fault of the interpreters ; there is nothing of it in the commandment. It is the word of the considerate father of the family of man, who would not have school keep all the week, nor the mills run from Monday morning round to Monday morning. You will be tempted, the message meant, to take life quite too seriously, and to work too hard and too long. Don't do it. Enjoy yourselves. Bring the element of recreation into your life. Establish and maintain holidays, holy to God and to man, in which you may be freely and blessedly idle.

This is also the meaning of our Lord's summons to the apostles, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." They were so busy that they could not be allowed to go on without danger to themselves and to their work. Stop it, then, at once ; and come, let us go a-rowing on the lake, let us get into the neighborhood of the cool breezes. On the further shore are trees and grass, and the waves are playing with the rocks, and there are no people : there let us lie down in the shade and rest.

We will do that, this summer. We will enter with all our hearts into the honest, innocent joys of outdoor life. We will have a good time, in the name of God. We will not be ashamed of it, nor make apologies for it. We will rejoice in it, as children of our Father in heaven.

The second element of a Christian vacation is appreciation. Appreciation, I mean, of that out-of-door world in which a holiday is properly spent. It is God's world, more directly and entirely than that environment of buildings and of books in which we pass so much of our time. To see it aright is, in a deep sense, to see God. To delight in it is to delight in God. To enter into it with sympathy and appreciation is to enter into the realized presence of God.

“ For I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods
 And mountains ; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
 Of eye and ear,—both what they half create
 And what perceive ; well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense
 The author of my purest thoughts, the muse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, the soul
 Of all my moral being.”

That is what we need, an appreciation of the moral significance of nature, a delight in it as the gift of God, as the revelation of God, as the visible manifestation of God.

Our love of God has sometimes a self-consciousness about it which takes away its joy. We put upon ourselves a kind of compulsion to love God. We set about the act of realizing God and loving God as if it were a task. This is largely because we associate God with only a part of life, with prayers and churches. God is in all life. We need not urge ourselves into artificial affection for Him. What He wants is the love which children give their parents, about which they do not reason nor examine themselves, but which is natural, instinctive, spontaneous. Let us live in the natural world as in the house of God, our Father. Let us see in the beauty of it, in its

forms and colors, in its changing lights, in its adaptation to our needs, the loving providence of God, who careth for us. Let us understand that to enjoy it is to love God. To look out across the lake at the procession of the hills, to watch the moving clouds by day and the moving stars by night, to walk beside the water, to sail over it, to plunge under it, to delight in the saltness and the coolness of the sea, to sit under the shadows of the great trees, and just to think that all this is given to us by the hand of God, is to grow in grace, and in the knowledge and the love of God. Let us not anxiously ask ourselves whether we love God. Let us give ourselves up to His blessed presence, whom the heavens declare, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Let us take it, and be glad of it, going out into it with a sense of possession, as the children of God, enjoying ourselves in our Father's house. Let us read in it as in a book of devotion,—the Bible of the hills and skies, written by God's hand. Let us listen in the stillness to the anthem of the waters and the fields: O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord. Praise Him and magnify Him forever.

The third element of a Christian vacation is reflection. The summer is a time for quiet thinking. All the rest of the year we are sub-

ject to interruption. We have, indeed, that stimulus to thought which comes from the imperative demand of the immediate moment. The word must be said, the thing must be done, and we are compelled to think it out. But in order that we may say the right word, and do the right thing, the thought of the moment must be based upon a strong foundation of serious and continued thinking. And in the summer, if we are wise, we will lay such a foundation. We will apply ourselves in these long days of peace to the consideration of great principles. We will read great books. We will lay up in stock a store of strength against the coming year.

For example, it is excellent to spend a summer in the reading of history. Take one of the long histories—Gibbon, Froude, Gardiner, Green, Parkman, Motley, Fiske—and read it through. It is significant that so large a part of the Bible is occupied by books of history. It means that through history we come to a knowledge of God. We see God in the world of human society, and we are thus prepared to see God with like plainness in our contemporary annals, in the events which are recorded in the daily newspapers. Much that we read there needs the background of the past for its interpretation. The continual experience of

the people of Israel was uplifted and dignified by being thus kept in living relation with the old time. Every common day had its place in that splendid history. And the whole history from first to last was ennobled and illuminated by the consciousness of God. The annals of Israel were different from those of other nations, but a great part of the difference was in the spirit in which they were written. The historians of Israel were aware of the presence of God in all the facts of human life. If the summer can bring us into that same consciousness of the divine in the life of our own age, and in the progress of our own community it will be a Christian summer.

Excellent, also, is the reading of poetry, of great poetry. How long is it since we read the "Iliad," or the "Divine Comedy," or the tragedies of Shakespeare, or the Book of Job, or "Paradise Lost," or the "Ring and the Book"? For most of us, these are undertakings too vast for our busy days. The summer gives us opportunity for such high privileges. Let us take a poet with us into our country home, and give him the freedom of the hearth and of the fields, and listen to all he has to say. Let us read the whole range of his verse, till we get into the heart of his heart, and behold the world out of his eyes, or better out of

our own eyes, taught by him to see. Part of the time we will look at the page, part of the time we will look at the sky and at the hills, till the new heaven and the new earth begin to shine about us.

Or the summer may be used for the working out of some problem, some question of ethics or of belief, some deep and weighty matter of which we find ourselves more ignorant than we ought to be. We will take it, and think about it. We will carry it with us into the woods, or over the water, or among the high mountains, and there meditate upon it with that quietness of spirit and clearness of vision which the clamor and confusion of the importunate months obstruct but which are among the most precious blessings of the summer.

I have spoken now of three elements of a Christian vacation,—recreation, appreciation and reflection. A fourth element is devotion. By this I mean the religious life as it is related to the services and institutions of the church. The privileges of the church are to the Christian what the privileges of art are to the artist, and of music to the musician. They are the thing that he wants. Accordingly, the Christian in choosing a place in which to spend the summer will take the religious op-

portunities into account. It is not necessary to say to the good Christian that he ought to go to church in the country. He will go, not because he ought, but because he desires to go. It is his pleasure and profit. To those who call themselves Christians, however, and are not so good Christians as they should be, it needs to be said that church-going in the country even more than in the city is a social duty, and that they who neglect it harm their neighbors. The Church in the country suffers greatly from vicious division, and loses thereby in dignity, and in effectiveness. Nevertheless, it is one of the agencies—and the most potent of all the agencies—for the uplifting of the community. The country minister in most instances is a faithful man who is laboring at much self-sacrifice for the good of the people. The privileged folk who come from the great churches of the cities will either help or hinder him. If they are honest Christian people, they will help him. They will understand that their simple presence at the services encourages both the minister and the congregation. It is a small thing to do, at the beginning of a week of leisure and pleasure, to spend a Sunday morning in the village church. It may not be a beautiful church, and neither the praying nor the

preaching may be very good, measured by the standards of polite society. But He is there who promised His blessed presence wherever two or three are met together in His name; and the devout soul will recognize Him and rejoice in Him. There will be a benediction in the summer stillness, and the bare walls will shine with celestial pictures, and in the voice of the minister He will speak, who cares little for enticing words of man's wisdom but entrusts His messages to holy and humble men of heart. The worshiper will get good as well as do good. Suppose, however, that he does not get much good, then let him go to church as an intelligent and right-minded citizen, performing an act of courtesy, of social politeness, of considerate and gracious good manners, of decent interest in the welfare of one's neighbors.

These reflections upon the Christian and social duty of church-going in the country are applicable even when the church is not one of our kind. It is natural and right that we should prefer the service as it is in the prayer-book. The religious exercises of our Protestant neighbors, wherein the sermon is of chief importance and is preceded and followed by extemporary prayer, seems to us cold and unsatisfying: we cannot help it. We crave

the richness, the variety, the warmth, the holy associations, the uplift and impulse of a service in which the instinct of worship is recognized and given utterance. But we are not very good Christians if we are so dependent on the forms of the service that we cannot get along without them. And we are very childish and foolish and narrow and unchristian Christians if we cannot kneel with our Christian brethren of whatever name and join them in approaching our common Father. Partisanship is very well, if one belongs to the right party, and pays an honest allegiance to it : but patriotism is a thousandfold better. Churchmanship is very well, but Christianity is the essential thing. Above all religious organizations is that universal church over which no pope nor bishop rules, and which no society is old enough nor wide enough to contain. As churchmen, we will go to "the church," as we say, if we can find it ; but as Christians, we will go anywhere, under whatever roof, into whatever service, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Unitarian, Quaker,—it matters not, where we can find God worshiped in any way, and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, loved and followed. The only religious society which is to be carefully avoided by all churchmen and Christians is the Ancient Order of Pharisees.

The churchman who stays at home on Sunday because there is no other house of worship in the village but the Methodist may suddenly find himself a member in good and regular standing of the Ancient Order of Pharisees.

Recreation, appreciation, reflection, and devotion will admit us into the high privilege of a Christian summer. Out of such a vacation, spent in the society of nature, of noble books, of our neighbors and of God, we ought to come back strong and sound to resume our work and do it better. May God bless it to our needs, the happiness of it, the health of it, the occupations of it, all its days of sun and of storm, all its experiences. May He thereby make us better men and women, better Christians, wiser and happier and holier. Let us not say by and by in the words of the prophet, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Let us rather say in the words of the psalmist, "Thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains: Thy judgments are like the great deep." "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High."

THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED.

One of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.—*John* 13: 23.

ST. JOHN the apostle stood at the top of a profession in which all good people are engaged. He was a saint; to which excellent estate we are all called. It may well be of interest and profit to us, disciples like him of the Lord Jesus, and members as he was of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood of the Blessed Life, to consider how this our neighbor, who in his boyhood caught fish for a living in the Lake of Galilee, became so eminent a person. Think of it! a sun-browned fisherman, who plied his homely trade in the waters of a Syrian pond, has gained a name greater than that of Alexander or of Cæsar. In countless cities, under all the skies of the planet, consecrated buildings, costly and beautiful, bear his name. For now these many centuries, words of his writings have stirred the hearts of the best men and women of the world, and have been an encouragement in defeat, a comfort in trouble, a shield and spear in spiritual conflict, an enrichment of life, a fountain of pure joy. Add together the intellectual and

moral achievements of Aristotle and of Plato ; yes, and of all the philosophers beside who ever wrote in any language ; and the result of all the good they ever did, of all the change they ever wrought in man's believing or behaving, will not compare for a moment with the contribution which this fisherman has made to the best wealth of the world. For the sources of our Christian faith are plainly these : first, the life of Jesus Christ ; secondly, the interpretations of His life. The story of what He did and said is set down plainly in the first three gospels : the meaning of it is declared by St. John and by St. Paul : by St. Paul, the apostle of the atonement, and by St. John, the apostle of the incarnation. St. John does not tell the Christmas story : his account of our Lord begins with the baptism. But it is from him chiefly that we learn the supreme truth with which the Fourth Gospel opens, that the Word was God and was made flesh. He it was, with St. Paul, who perceived God in Christ, and taught men so. How did he do it ? How did it come to pass ? How did John of Bethsaida, fish vender, grow up into the beloved disciple, St. John the Divine ?

The father of John was Zebedee ; his mother was Salome. We are not told much about

either of them: of his father, very little, indeed. He was a fisherman, with some small means,—a master fisherman, having men in his employ. He seems to have owned a house in Jerusalem, to which after the tragedy of the crucifixion, John took the Virgin Mother. His wife, probably after his death, is said to have ministered unto Jesus of her substance. It is plain, however, that he was by no means rich: at least, he was not so rich but that he worked with his hands, pulling at oars and sails and nets. The only clear look we get at him shows him with his sons and his hired men, a sturdy, sunburned person, with a fisherman's needle in his hands, busy at the common task. We see enough to know that he was industrious and frugal, of a practical habit, not impulsive, not given to dreaming in the daytime, nor enthusiastic, nor even hospitable towards new ideas, intent upon the lake and the weather, the nets and the fish, going steadily to and fro, day after day, between his house and his boat.

When Jesus came and called his two sons, he sat silent, not offering to go himself, yet opposing no hindrance to their going. The sentence in the gospel, "Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons," has been used as a text for a sermon in-

tended for men who do not go to church, beginning, "But where was Zebedee?" Various reasons are assigned for Zebedee's absence. It is altogether likely that by that time Zebedee was dead. Still, the fact remains that while his wife was deeply interested in religion, and his sons devoted themselves to it, Zebedee himself appears to have gone on about his ordinary business. He stayed at home, and attended to the fishing.

Salome, it is thought, was a sister of the mother of our Lord: for St. John says that in the group of women by the cross of Jesus was "His mother's sister," and St. Matthew, describing the same group, speaks of the "mother of Zebedee's children." If so, she belonged to a family which was naturally religious, and spent her girlhood in the company of one whose thoughts and words and life must have been constantly devout and uplifted. That she afterwards devoted herself to the service of her nephew, and attended Him wherever He went that she might minister to Him not only gives us a new sight of the homely domestic relationships of the life of Jesus, but serves also to bear witness to her ardent spirit. There was probably a good deal of external contrast between Zebedee and Salome. That unlikeness between the father

and the mother, one saying little, the other saying much ; one appearing to pay but small heed to religion, the other manifestly devout, is not uncommon.

Both father and mother reappear in John. He was no leader, like Peter. He was no speaker. In the conference at Jerusalem over the questions which arose out of Paul's missionary experiences he spoke no word,—a quiet, silent man, like his father Zebedee. From his mother he derived his religious spirit and his depth of affection. A certain swiftness of temper, a strain of jealousy in his affection, a tendency to be so absorbed in a present purpose as to be careless of the rights of others, may also be the mother in the son. For it is not only by the direct training of the parents that the character of their children is determined. The children depend less on what their parents do and say than on what their parents are. Character goes on from one generation to another, now uplifted, now degraded, but inevitably handed down, a heritage of benediction or of malediction.

It is not likely that St. John went much to school. It is certain that he was quite untrained in the rabbinical philosophy which constituted what was then accounted education. He learned to read, and he read much

in the greatest book that ever was written,—in the Bible. That he had an eager mind is evident in all that we know about his life. But beyond the most elementary sort of book-learning, he got the remainder, and the greater part, of his education in the world.

We make a mistake if we imagine that education consists wholly, or chiefly, in acquaintance with printed pages, in the friendship of books. He is best educated who knows the world in which he lives, and has learned to look with sympathy and understanding into the faces of his fellow men. The walls of the study imprison the conventional scholar. His horizon is bounded by his books and pictures. Superstitions, prejudices, heresies, narrownesses of various kinds, grow in the brain of him who sits with his back to the window and his feet to the fire, forever reading. John the fisherman, busy with his work, under the wide sky, on the stormy lake, minding the net and the sail, casting for a draught, counting the good fish, occupied with his traffic along the wharves of Bethsaida and in the fish market of Jerusalem, learned lessons of which the dim-eyed scribes and Pharisees, studying old books, were altogether ignorant.

One would have easily said, however, that this fisher lad had but a poor chance at the prizes

of the world. Compare him, for example, with other boys, his contemporaries in Bethsaida and Capernaum, born in homes of wealth and leisure, given manifold daily privileges of education and opportunity. Out of all these lads who have their residence within reach of the winds which blow across the lake, who shall be the best esteemed? who shall be known and approved by the most people? who shall take the largest place in the general life? Only the very wise would have pointed to this son of Zebedee.

Wonderful, this subtle difference in the destinies of men! Out of a group of school-boys, out of the clerks in an office, out of the unending procession in the street, one becomes a scholar and enriches the world's store of profitable knowledge, or a merchant whose ships are in all waters, or a citizen whose public service ennobles the community in which he lives. The others go on around the corner into oblivion. And we wonder why: why did he succeed, and make so much of himself? why did his companion fail?

In the case of John the fisherman we can see one of the reasons. This stout lad with the tanned cheeks and arms has a strong longing in his heart to know the best and be the best he can. That is the beginning of difference.

Others are content to take the daily haul of fish : he is not satisfied with that. He would have not only fish but friends. And see these friends—young men who stand erect, with nothing mean about them, vigorous, intelligent, thoughtful, true. James is his brother, Andrew and Peter are their partners, Philip is of the company, and perhaps Nathaniel of Cana. These are John's companions. These, in a true sense, are his teachers ; according to Emerson's saying, " Send your son to school and the boys will teach him." On land or water, this group of young men meet every day, and their lives go on together into the greatest work that was ever given men to do. These are his friends : such friends that Jesus Christ, choosing only twelve apostles out of all the multitude of His disciples, takes these six, every man of them.

But even this did not content John. He was not satisfied even with this society of congenial and helpful companions. He was intent on improving himself, wanted to learn more and more, and had an insatiable appetite for truth,—for the truth which is the source of strength. When he heard of a man who had a message, he went to hear him tell it. It might be even at a distance, away down the valley of the Jordan : nevertheless, when there

was bad weather so that he could not work, or when he had sold his fish in the Jerusalem market and had a day off in which to look about him, straight he would betake himself where truth was taught. Thus it was that he came to John the Baptist, and found in him a better teacher than he had ever heard in the synagogues of Capernaum, and was enrolled as his disciple. And then one day, as he walked with the new master, evidently a favorite pupil, there passed along the road One to whom the Baptist called attention: "Behold, the Lamb of God!" And immediately the fisherman obeyed. The ardent searcher after truth followed the new master. He became acquainted with Jesus of Nazareth. Became acquainted with Him! He was His neighbor and His cousin. Yes, but now of a sudden he recognized Him. Thus the true light dawned within his soul.

It was Jesus of Nazareth who lifted this young Galilean fisherman above the other men of his generation. It was the entrance of this new light into his life which made a saint of John. But John was on the watch for all the good that he could find, for all the truth that any man could tell him: that was the beginning of it. Without that, Jesus might have encountered John a hundred times, and never

have been recognized. That distance between sight and recognition is one of the universal distinctions. It was said of our Lord that He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. The star shone in the Christmas sky where everybody could see it, but the wise men, strangers from a far country, were the only ones who followed it. The lighted lamp hung at the door of the stable in Bethlehem, and many men and women passed, their long shadows reaching to the middle of the road, their minds fixed upon their errands great or small; all these passed unheeding, only the shepherds entered. And Jesus went about the common streets day after day, and was seen and heard familiarly of men for several years, most of whom looked Him in the face and did not know Him.

That happens every hour. He comes again in every opportunity, in every crisis of our joy or sorrow, in every call which makes itself heard however faintly in the heart of man. And there is still the same benediction in His presence that there was in Galilee; the same strong hand is held out still to lift us up above the lower levels; to-day He waits, as then, to bless us; to-day He is ready, as ever, to make saints out of sinners. As many as receive Him, to them gives He power to become the

sons of God. But some are blind and cannot see; some will not see; to some, His coming appears so commonplace, so simple and homely, that they do not believe that it is He. They only who are looking patiently and eagerly, as John was, for knowledge, for betterment, for blessing, along the common road, recognize Him and gain His benediction.

But John was no saint yet. He had, indeed, become a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, and that was much, but it was only the beginning of this new stage of his spiritual journey.

It is encouraging to see how much the new disciple had to learn. We grow disheartened, failure multiplies upon us, spiritual defeat befalls us again and again, the ideal seems astronomically remote,—dim in the immeasurable, even inaccessible, distance. At such times, we may profitably note the disadvantages of temper and of disposition which beset the way of John the fisherman.

Once he met a man who was casting out devils in the name of Jesus, and yet belonged not to the apostolic company. John forbade him sharply. He forbade him to do good, irregularly. Again, when the people of a village in Samaria refused them shelter, John desired that fire might descend from heaven and burn up the inhospitable people. He wanted to

have them struck by lightning. Again, near the close of our Lord's ministry, we have to remember against John how he and James got their mothers to ask the Master for the best places in His kingdom, one on the right hand and the other on the left ; leaving the lower places for their companions.

These instances show what manner of man he must have been by nature,—jealous, somewhat narrow-minded, quick of temper, inconsiderate of the feelings, even of the rights of others, selfish, ambitious. These are not the adjectives which are commonly used in articles of beatification : they are not a good description of a saint. Yet this was true of the beloved disciple. All this, little by little, contending as we must, he put down and under. Day by day, fighting against that which was unchristian in him and overcoming, he increased in the favor of God.

And Jesus loved him. He who came to live our life, beginning it in pain and poverty on a chill night, cradled in a manger, so that He might know by personal experience how hard a life it is to live aright, loved John in the midst of his faults. Jesus did not wait till John became a saint. A sinner, like the rest of us, weak in temptation as we are, daily missing his ideal as we do, a man with a heart

and a will like ours, was the disciple whom Jesus loved. Every striving soul, weighed down under a burden of transgression but struggling to get free, far from God yet trying to draw near, sinning but with bitterness repenting, is loved of God as he was.

THE SATISFACTION OF RELIGION.

Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst,—*John 4 : 14.*

It is a promise of complete satisfaction. It is also a statement of the essential purpose of the Christian religion, and explains why we build churches, and consecrate them in the name of God to the service of man. The church is meant to be a fountain of water on a dusty road, in a thirsty land. It is for the sake of the greater happiness of the neighborhood.

The promise appeals to all of us, and offers that which all of us desire. Some of the first explorers of this continent were seeking for a well of life out of which they might drink and thereafter be young forever and live in sweet content. They never found it, but they never ceased their search till death stopped them; and then they passed the quest to us. Is it not the object of our deep desire? Is it not the goal of our best hope? We would be happy: is not that the essential formula of all ambition?

Some, it is true, are looking for the well of

joy in most unlikely places, along sandy beaches, where there are no trees, and where the water, if they found any, would not be pleasant to the taste. They are disregarding all the guide-posts, and defying the moral compass and despising all experience. One would think, for example, that by this time it had been made sufficiently plain that the path of appetite leads to the pit of destruction, and not to happiness. It has been tried often enough. Nobody ever got to happiness that way. The condition of that road and what there is at the end of it, are advertised in the papers every day in the week. Nothing else is given quite such prominence. There it is every day in big black capitals: *Appetite Avenue. This Way to the Slough of Despond and the Great Bad.* And yet there is a continual procession of seekers after happiness going through that gate.

Nevertheless, whatever be the road, we are all in search of happiness. We may be as ignorant of moral geography, as the crusaders were unacquainted with the map of Europe. The crusaders thought that every strange, large town must be Jerusalem. They looked expectantly for the dome of the temple across the fields of Germany. They hoped to see the hill of Zion from the Bavarian Alps. That

shows how eager they were to reach the holy city. It is a symbol of our common life. We are all looking for Jerusalem, the metropolis of satisfaction. Instinctively, imperatively, following the summons of our human nature, we are all trying to be happy.

Our Lord is here distinguishing between two kinds of happiness, the temporary and the permanent. One satisfies for a time, the other continues throughout all time. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again : but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."

The natural water of the well is a symbol of our material and temporal satisfactions. It means the many pleasant things about us, our houses with books and pictures in them, the tables at which we sit for our daily meals, our comforts and conveniences, our work, our interests, our customary pleasures, our attained ambitions. It means the happiness which comes from the sense of appreciation and from the spirit of service.

This is good water : it quenches thirst. The Master stood beside the well in Samaria, and looked down into its cool depths, and seated Himself on its stone curb in the shade of the trees, and said to the woman with the bucket, "Give Me to drink." When He took the

water of the well as a symbol of the unsatisfying joys, He blessed them by that word. He did not, indeed, give them the best place in His esteem, but He gave them a good place. He said that they were as good as cold water. He said that the happiness which comes from appreciation of the world and from the service of our neighbors, is as refreshing as cold water. He knew by His own experience how true a satisfaction is to be found among the hills and in the fields, in the pages of great books wherein the teachers of old time have recorded their adventures in the discovery of truth, and in the life which they live who are giving their best thought and strength to the betterment of the community. He had gone along these pleasant ways, and He knew that they all lead into the gardens of bliss, into the realms of pure delight. What He said was that none of these common satisfactions satisfies permanently.

For example, the people of an academic community are absorbingly interested in books. They find in the quiet of a library a haven of peace and joy. They are enthusiastically engaged in reading and in writing books. Everybody in the street has a book under his arm. Some of them feel that the best of life is in a book. But this is a form of happiness which is

closely dependent on good health, and on a fair amount of prosperity. In the hour of pain, in the time of trouble, books are unavailing. It is true that a scholar said, after a period of deep distress, "Books have saved my reason and my life." They do help. They do enable the reader to forget for a moment even a very forlorn condition. But they do this only for the literary people: and not very well, even for them. No, the book demands the sun. The night blots out the page. A keen disappointment, a fierce pain, a visitation of sorrow closes the common doors of happiness. The melancholy wind comes howling out of the desert, and shut they go, all the customary doors into the house of happiness, while we stand shivering without.

It is true that there is a kind of consolation in work. The wise man leaves himself as little time as possible for sad thoughts. He fills his mind with other matters. Out he goes from the scene of his bereavement, from the associations of his sorrow, and plunges into work. There in the midst of the importunate demands of new interests, he tries to forget. How does he succeed? You who have tried it know. Work helps. For most people who are trying to escape from grief, it helps more than books. It corrects the perspective of our life. It

shows us that our personal distress, which looms up bigger than the eternal mountains, is but a part of the universal landscape, and belongs among the inevitable pains of human existence. But work affords no lasting comfort. It is like the opiate which gives the sick man an hour of artificial sleep. Up he wakes, to find the old pain waiting for him.

That is the truth about it. Appreciation of the world of nature and of letters, and active service in the world of men, are blessed resources while they last, but they are soon exhausted. We drink of the water of the well, and for the moment are refreshed: then we thirst again. That is what Jesus said: none of these things permanently satisfies.

But there are satisfied souls. There are men and women who are beautifully and blessedly and amazingly happy: and whose serenity is not disturbed, so far as we can see, by any of the ills of life.

Remember, for example, the complete and uninterrupted satisfaction of the supreme spiritual Master. What a rich life He lived! What a plenitude of peace and joy was His! Who will say, Yes, but He missed so much,—so much that Herod had, and Pilate, in their palaces? He missed nothing. It is true that He was poor; and that He was often unap-

preciated, misunderstood, and disappointed. It is true that He passed through bitter crises when He was reviled and rejected : and that He died upon the cross. But we make a great mistake if we imagine that His was a life of sadness, a journey on the Way of Weeping. No, He went along the Path of Peace, along the sure road to happiness, wherein the wayfarer sees continually before him the shining steeples of the City of Great Joy. Remember that day, just before the beginning of the holy week—that day whose anniversary, for all we know, we may be at this moment keeping—when He set out for the last time to go to Jerusalem. He walked before along the country road, between the fields of early spring, and the disciples followed after. And as they looked at Him their hearts were filled with great astonishment : they were “amazed” : so quick was His step, so high His head, so jubilant and victorious His manner. He knew whither He went, past Gethsemane,—yes, past Calvary,—into His true native land. He knew that He was achieving the pursuit of happiness.

Or take St. Paul : what a life he had ; what a hard life and at the same time what a happy life. He gave himself to the service of his fellow men ; and they stoned him in the

streets. Even that might easily have been endured had he been conscious of success. Success softens adversity. A man can stand being stoned if he knows that he is accomplishing his purpose. Even stoning may be cheerfully accepted as a part of the day's work of the hero. The recompense of the hero is success. But St. Paul had little of the encouragement of success. We know now that he was laying the strong foundations of the Christianity, even of the civilization, of Europe. We know that the letters which he wrote are read to-day, Sunday by Sunday, in splendid churches which are called by his name. But of all this he knew nothing. When he wrote the letters he was thinking of the people of Corinth or of Rome; never for a moment of any distant future fame. And there were many of his contemporaries who thought them very objectionable letters. When he laid the foundation stones, he was quite uncertain whether they would stay laid. There were jealous brethren following hard after him with picks and crowbars, intent on prying them up. Some of them they did pry up. St. Paul was much better acquainted with failure than he was with success.

And yet he was happy, continually and abidingly happy. You know how they shut

him up in prison,—Paul and Silas,—in the foulest dungeon of the common jail, and made their feet fast in the stocks; and how he and his companion sang there in the night. No voice of song had been heard within those walls since the day the builders left them. But Paul and Silas could not help singing. They were happy and they showed it: happy in their high mission, happy in the approval of heaven, happy in their victory over themselves.

In spite of all the hard times that St. Paul had, he kept his temper and his courage and the serenity of his soul. In addition to all his other troubles, he was sick: he had to have a doctor go with him on his journeys. But the sickness made no difference. That, too, he conquered. It is plain that he had discovered the supreme secret.

They who in the old time sought the well of life imagined that a draught of its water would enable them to live forever. But the best of life is not its length: it is not the chronological quantity of it. Better fifty years of our own unspeakably interesting age than all the dull centuries of Methuselah. What did the patriarch do with all his weary years? He was born at the beginning of them; in the midst of them he was married and had chil-

dren; and at the end he died; and all the dreary intervening spaces are absolutely blank. He has the reputation of having been the oldest man that ever lived,—the emptiest of reputations. The oldest man, and nothing to show for it! Opportunity interminably prolonged, and nothing to show for it! Let us hope that the critics may be able to show that the figures are mistaken, and that Methuselah did not, after all, live so preternaturally long; for as the record stands it is a thing to be ashamed of,—to live so long and do so little!

Not the quantity but the quality of life is what we need: not a well whose water shall prolong our days, but one whose water shall ennoble and enrich them, the well of peace, the well of joy, the well in whose depths tradition says truth dwells, the well of which Christ spoke when He said that whoever drank of it should thirst no more. St. Paul had tasted the water of that well.

It may be objected that the example of St. Paul is somewhat remote from our common life. Paul was a saint, and lived a long time ago. But this contrast between one's circumstances and one's state of mind is within the range of our own observation. It is a contemporary matter, observable to-day on our street. Here in our own neighborhood are

happy people, persistently and triumphantly happy, facing disaster and mastering it and themselves. Who of us is not acquainted with some tranquil soul, on whom the storms of life have fiercely beaten, who has suffered poverty or pain or bereavement, and whose nature is keenly sensitive to all these ills, and yet whose eyes are bright with light celestial? These persons verify and illustrate the paradox of the apostle who said of himself and his friends that they were "sorrowful but alway rejoicing." We do not need to go back to the saints of the legends and the pictured windows: here are living saints, repeating in our presence the miracle of the heavenly life. Here are they who pursuing happiness have found it.

Where have they found it? How do they preserve their courage, their strength, their cheerfulness, their faith? In a hard world, wherein they are experiencing more than the common lot of hardship, how do they manage to be happy? These persons have found the supreme treasure. Nobody, I suppose, will question that. Nothing can be better than this abiding happiness. Nothing can be finer than to be independent of the changes and chances of our mortal life. Here men stand on the ultimate eminence of human achievement.

We look up to these calm heights, and there behold these friends and neighbors, in the light of God. How did they get there? The answer is that the road by which they climbed up out of the mists and storms is the road of religion.

Here are facts which anybody may verify : persons on beds of pain, smiling ; persons walking in a howling tempest of adversity, pelted as they go by poverty, injustice, ingratitude, failure of their plans and hopes, and yet proceeding with a firm step and a cheerful spirit, going bravely on even alone with clear eyes and a good courage. And back of it all, accounting for it all, is the comfort and inspiration of religion. Ask them, and they will tell you. All this they endure and do through Christ who strengthens them. The secret of it, the heart of it, is religion. They have an apprehension of God, a realization of God, a consciousness of the presence of God, and in consequence of it they are strong and satisfied.

There are two good reasons why religion satisfies : because it enriches life, and because it interprets life.

It enriches life. It opens the way into a new kind of joy. He who has "experienced religion," as people used to say, he who has got hold of this elemental truth, knows

what is meant in the Bible by a new heavens and a new earth. There they are: shining above his head, solid beneath his feet. Thus Jesus said that He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. That is, He came to widen out the circle of appreciation. The effect of religion, thus considered, is akin with the effect of all progress; it teaches new truth, awakens new aspirations, develops new possibilities, rounds out more completely the natural life of man.

Here, for example, is one who lives beside a country road, whose interests are bounded, west and south and east and north, by the fences of his farm. He does not respond to the invitations of books, or of art, or of music, or even of nature which shines for him and sings for him in his narrow acres. How little the man gets from the beautiful world in which he lives. Help him, then; teach him; make him hear the birds sing and see the sun; show him how to bring the homely routine of his farm into relation with the life of the wide world; put poetry into his soul; let him read a book when he comes in from the field and think about it to-morrow as he follows the furrow. It is plain that he is more of a man. He is better satisfied. He has multiplied his resources, and knows better what to do with

himself when it rains, and is happier than he was.

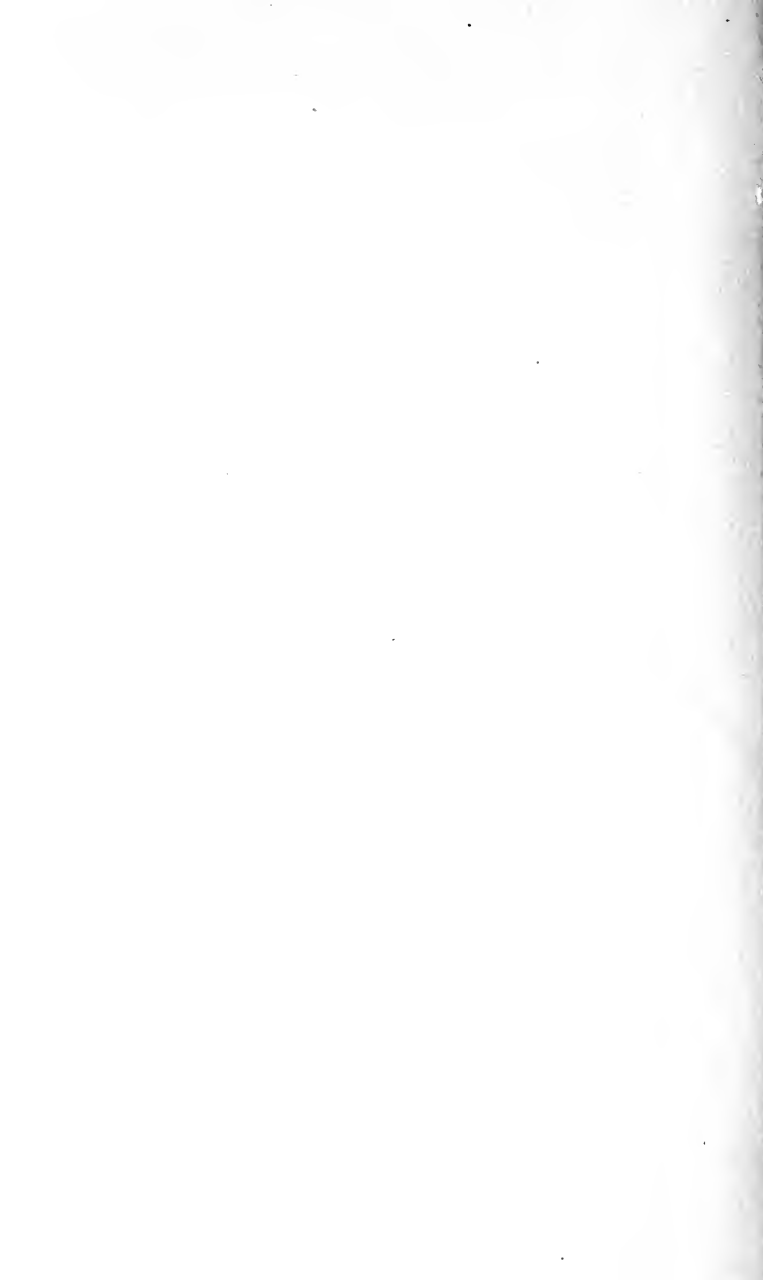
Even so, he is an incomplete being. A man may have sound sense and an active mind and still belong to the defective classes. What lack I yet? he says. The answer is the awakening of his soul. He has been brought into a living consciousness of the beautiful and wonderful world about him, now let him become aware of the beautiful and wonderful world above him. Let him hear the inaudible and see the invisible. Let him converse with God. He is a new man. He is born again: that is the only adequate expression of it. He enters into a new life. A while ago, if he had been deprived of a physical pleasure he would have felt that he had been robbed of all he had; and he would have been right about it. He was a poor man. They might not have said so at the bank; but that was the fact. With all his possessions, he was poor. Now he is rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and his wealth is of the kind which no thief can steal.

Religion enriches life: it also interprets life. This is its supreme and characteristic quality. "Then thought I to understand this," the psalm says, "but it was too hard for me; until I went into the house of God." Even religion does not explain life;

perhaps because we do not know enough to receive the explanation. It does not make the hard world plain. It does not write the answer at the end of the problem. Sorrow makes its inevitable entrance into our life, and even religion does not tell us why. What religion does is to assure us that somehow it is right. The supreme revelation which Jesus Christ brought with Him into the darkness of human perplexity is that God is our loving Father. We are as remote from comprehending Him as the small child is remote from understanding the plans of his parents. But there He is; that is the great thing. There out of sight; or rather, here,—here by our side,—is the eternal Father-God, caring for us, loving us, bringing good out of ill for us, somehow in His own wise way working for our good. "Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all." Religion fills men with that conviction. It makes us sure of God, of His being, of His presence and His power, of His divine love and care. The world is our Father's house, and all that happens to us in it, whether it be good or ill, belongs to His wise discipline of our souls.

Thus we drink of the living water of the celestial well, and thirst no more. We enter into the blessed satisfaction of religion.







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